

# Letter from the President



## It's All About Our Vision

“What do I want to be when I grow up?”

This question has been asked of us many times, and is often answered without much thought with a simple “I don’t know.” While this answer may be acceptable for individuals, it can be ruinous for organizations.

Strategic plans position organizations to answer this question clearly. The heart of a strategic plan is its vision statement. Too often such statements are generic. A vision statement should do two things: identify the institution and define its priorities. We have written a new vision statement for IIT that meets these two criteria [see p. 15].

From February 2008 until May 2009, we engaged the entire IIT community in developing the university’s vision, priorities, and goals, and the outcome is a new strategic plan for IIT, *Many Voices, One Vision*. We worked hard to answer the questions “what do we want to be?” and “how do we get there?”

Now we embark on the next important stage: implementation. Task forces are being set up to define and execute the initiatives required by the vision, for example, an Innovation Sandbox, an International Academy, and elements of a distinctive IIT education. This stage is not easy, but I believe that setting a high target, as described by our vision statement, was even more difficult. Now we know what we are aiming to do.

Our strategic plan is a living document and will be adjusted annually to reflect changes in circumstances—internal and external to the university. Strategies will be modified to cope with changing conditions and to exploit new opportunities, but the vision remains constant. It is our target and will not move until it is achieved.

An important facet of strategic planning is its level of expectations. There is great value in setting high expectations. My four decades of faculty service have convinced me that when you expect more, you get more. Expectations of oneself and others represent a critical component to improvement. We are aiming high, and we intend to get there.

It’s all about our vision. It is aggressive and optimistic. To reach our goals, we need the help of the entire IIT community—alumni and friends, faculty, staff, students, the Board of Trustees, and our local community. I invite you to participate and look forward to hearing from you as we implement our plan. You are welcome to submit your ideas to *Many Voices, One Vision* via email at [manyvoices@iit.edu](mailto:manyvoices@iit.edu).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John L. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John L. Anderson  
President