

# Letter from the President



## Pursuit of Excellence in Tough Times

A prominent government official has been quoted as saying, “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.” While many interpretations of this statement are possible, there is a kernel of wisdom here: tough times offer any organization an opportunity to examine itself—its vision, priorities, and practices. Difficult financial times have been and will always be with us. Although IIT is experiencing budget challenges, like other universities are, we must have the courage to pursue innovation if we are to achieve our goals.

While there is pain, there can also be gain. If we make the right moves, the outcomes of our good work may far exceed our initial expectations. This makes our commitment now—both to weather the economic storm and to be the best at what we do—all the more important, in spite of the difficulties we may experience along the way.

Our strategic plan, *Many Voices, One Vision*, will be presented to the Board of Trustees in May for adoption. We are already forming task forces to plan steps to bring initiatives to fruition. One example is the International Academy, a new initiative to bring an international culture to all students and faculty at IIT. We are also establishing task forces on redefining and reengineering our Interprofessional Projects (IPRO) program for undergraduates, defining university-wide themes for research and distinctive education, improving administrative services for students, and enhancing student participation in our sports programs. You will hear more about these activities in the fall.

One major campus-wide initiative we are pursuing actively is the IIT Perfect Power System, the cover story of this issue. To excel in this area will require a significant university investment even in this tough time. The concept of Perfect Power is relatively simple, but achieving a real system is a complex research and development project that requires the collaboration of many faculty, students, and staff across the university, and partnerships with outside organizations. While the current financial situation favors caution, the opportunity cost of not pursuing this initiative in a serious way could threaten our momentum toward leadership in this area.

It has been said that change is inevitable, but improvement is optional. IIT will definitely take the option of improvement, even in these times, and we will emerge stronger as a result.

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

John L. Anderson  
President