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Dear Belmont Graduate Student:

As Belmont celebrates yet another extraordinarily successful year and anticipates continuing progress, we are also keenly aware of the current economic crisis and its impact on institutions, individuals and families. Many of you have expressed concerns about how Belmont University is being affected and what its plans are for these uncertain times. Certainly, this is one of the most challenging financial situations our country has faced in many years and its long-term effects are difficult to predict. I do, however, want to reassure all of our students and their families that Belmont University is in a very solid financial position as it prepares to weather this storm.

Conservative, disciplined management of costs has always been a priority at Belmont. We remain committed to being good stewards of our finances while offering an excellent educational value to students. That commitment is one of the reasons that we are well positioned to face an uncertain economic future. It is also why Belmont continues to offer the lowest cost education of the private universities ranked in *U.S. News & World Report* Southern region's top twenty. Recognized by the magazine as a top "School to Watch" in its most recent rankings, Belmont has earned a reputation as a great value, known for its innovative approaches to education and the student experience.

In order to ensure the continuing quality of a Belmont education, and to attract and retain the best faculty and staff possible, we find it necessary to raise our tuition and fees for the 2009-10 academic year. Because of the unique nature of the graduate programs at Belmont, tuition increases for 2009-10 will vary per department. A complete list of graduate tuition fees by department is available on the Belmont Web site on the *Cost Estimator Link* found on the Student Financial Services page.

You will also receive a guide explaining Belmont's financial policies as well as cost and payment options in the next few weeks. Student Financial Services counselors are ready to answer your questions and offer assistance. As we move through these next months together, we strongly encourage you to keep us informed of any changes you may have experienced in your individual circumstances. Our goal is to help you succeed in attaining your goal—to graduate from Belmont prepared to "engage and transform" your world.

Despite the difficult times our country faces, I have every reason to be optimistic about our future. Our students continue to astound me and give me hope for the world they will soon lead. I could fill a book with countless examples of how Belmont students are fulfilling this university's mission: *[to provide] an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith.*

We are honored that you have entrusted your education to us. Thank you for your involvement in the Belmont community.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Fisher, president