An Open Letter to the Hopkins Community:

For all who know and care about Hopkins School, there are a number of certainties: one is that Hopkins is, at its essence, about its teachers and students; another is that our School is a supremely academic place; and a third is that, by necessity, we must operate with limited resources. We are reminded of the convergence of these certainties whenever we address facilities needs at Hopkins.

Over the past decade, we have sought to upgrade the School’s physical plant to a level commensurate with the quality of our people and our program. We have been committed to renovating existing facilities whenever possible; and we have considered replacement only when an existing building has come to compromise the work of our students and teachers. With several decisions taken at this past summer’s Board Retreat, it is now appropriate and timely to report to you on the direction we are taking in regard to our facilities and related matters.

- Lovell Hall, constructed in 1959, will experience a significant interior refit over the next year to further our commitment to the performing arts at Hopkins. A renovated Lovell will provide a long-needed upgrade of the Townshend Auditorium, including a sound and light booth, set construction space, set storage and air-handling systems. The former dining room and kitchen will be refigured as video production and theatre classrooms; instrumental music will, at last, have dedicated teaching space.

- Parking for students, visitors and others has been in short supply in recent years. We have commenced planning to build approximately forty additional parking spaces, mostly in the wooded area known as “Siberia.”

- The Cage, built in 1939, is being functionally renovated. A new roof was installed this summer, the north wall siding is currently being repaired and repainted, and new entry doors will be installed. In time, the Cage, Hopkins’ original athletic center, will again fulfill its role as a field house for Hopkins teams.

- Athletic fields, over-used, under-sized and in short supply, will be expanded over the next two years. Our plan is to move the baseball diamond south of the current fields and to create an omni-purpose field south of the new diamond. The old diamond will become a regulation soccer and lacrosse field and, altogether, these additions will significantly increase our options in terms of scheduling practices and games. Although the projects listed above will be
financed with operating and deferred maintenance reserves, we have a generous alumnus to thank for these new fields.

In addition to proceeding with the above-mentioned renovations, the Trustees and Administration have begun to study two other such projects scheduled to begin in the next academic year (2005/2006). A decision to proceed with either or both will be made in the context of the upcoming budget cycle:

- The Library is in need of a major renovation. Funds have been allocated for a full architectural review of our current options; that study has recently commenced.

- The Sears tennis courts need to be resurfaced, replaced or relocated in the near future, and plans will follow for the eventual upgrading of all tennis courts on campus.

After two years of study, a joint Trustee/Faculty Master Planning Committee concluded this summer that upgraded academic space remains the highest facilities priority on the Hopkins campus, and that the Junior School and visual arts program are currently occupying space in which renovation is not a viable option. The Trustees, therefore, authorized a new committee to study the replacement of both DPH and Reigeluth with a new academic building. The committee’s charge includes taking this question to the larger Hopkins community. As we meet over the next year or so -- informally, in open forums, and in smaller meetings -- we will welcome your perspectives and your ideas as we determine our future course of action.

Related to that process, a team of Trustees and administrators is beginning to evaluate the School’s current fundraising capability. In due course, this discussion will be expanded to include parents, alumni/ae and friends. The focus will be the funding of a major building project, such as the new academic building mentioned above, and related endowment needs, both of which are so vital to the mission of Hopkins. We will keep you informed as our plans and projects take further shape. In the meantime, thank you for your commitment to Hopkins.

Sincerely,

William J. Kneisel '65
President
Hopkins Committee of Trustees

Barbara M. Riley
Head of School