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**Daunted by the election?
Think *education*.**

Dear Mr. Rufer,

With the election, I'm sure many of you are wondering what direction the country is going to take. Are you appalled at their attitudes towards individualism and the flabby reasoning exhibited during the election campaigning? Both candidates seemed remarkably ignorant of economic principles, and all too ready to blame capitalism for our current economic problems while ignoring the governmental programs and mandates behind many economic developments.

All the more reason we need an educational institution where young people learn the full story about economics, the history of freedom, and individual rights, while they learn to think for themselves.

Ironically, economic hard times may be a boon for our new college. As you'll see in the article mentioned below, students are beginning to question the value of prestigious institutions, and looking for value alternatives. Hopefully, alumni will, too.

To widen our message, I'm starting a new blog, "[Liberating Education](#)." I look forward to your comments at the blog site. Perhaps some of you might even want to be guest posters. Please let others know about the blog, to widen our audience.

Please read my reports, below, on the exciting steps we are taking towards making the College a reality.

Regards,

Maisha



Fundraising Consultant Retained



After some time searching and communicating with several possible fundraising consultants, we have retained [A.C.Fitzgerald & Associates](#) to help us with the Capital Campaign.

Ms. Fitzgerald worked at the Heritage Foundation for 12 years, expanding and improving their fundraising programs, before opening her firm. Her firm works with organizations with a conservative or libertarian philosophy.

She and her associates will search for, identify, and research potential individual and organizational donors whose interests show they might want to support the College by pledging to the Capital Campaign or otherwise support us. She will also aid us in putting together our strategic plan for approaching and cultivating these potential donors.

She is also an expert on how to write grant applications to the various foundations and institutions supporting conservative/libertarian causes, and she'll be helping us with that angle also.

Currently, her firm is researching potential individual investor donors as well as sympathetic foundations. I will update you on progress in the near future.

Business Plan Developments

With the excellent, expert help of our trustee Reena Kapoor, and the financial guidance of advisor Roger Baumberger, we have been drastically editing and re-writing our business plan in order to make it easily grasped by potential donor investors. Most recently, supporter Don Krause is lending his hand to the re-write.

This rewrite includes creating graphic tables and a re-organization of the information in the plan. Currently, we're seeking some help from professionals expert in writing business plans to finalize this re-write.

The aim is to put together a well-written, easy to read document that presents the case for the College to potential investor donors.

Exciting Ways to Use the Web

Through IHS' Development Exchange, I recently learned of the [David All Group](#). This company specializes in Web 2.0 efforts to help advance causes.

I met with with them while in DC recently, to talk over ways that we can use the Web to enlist widespread interest from students and parents, as well as fundraising from large groups of people.

They're expert in tapping into the social networking programs, like Facebook and MySpace, which young people frequent. These are avenues ripe with dissatisfied students, looking for an exciting, empowering alternative college program.

Their group has helped various conservative organizations raise thousands of dollars by getting many people to donate \$25 each: apparently, many people find this an affordable amount to give.

Further, proof of widespread support is very important to show to potential large-dollar donors: It indicates the kind of market possible for our program.



The Difficult Economy Changes College Shopping

The *Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) on Thursday, October 30th that students and parents are being forced to shop for lower-cost alternatives, and schools closer to home as their stock-market-based savings plummet, credit becomes less available, and jobs more uncertain.

Applications to state schools, with their highly subsidized tuitions, grew from 20-30% since last year.

It will be interesting to see if this puts downward price-pressure on the elite institutions, some of which are now offering free tuition or large grants, which don't have to be repaid. Twenty years of [triple-the-rate-of-inflation price increases](#) have rocketed college tuition to dizzying heights.

Average tuition, plus room and board at top colleges is around \$50,000 per year.

Consequently, colleges have been in what a University of Kentucky administrator called an "arms race," building bigger and more attractive exercise facilities and dorms, and giving away goodies like Ipods, in the attempt to snare top students.

I founded Council Oak Montessori Elementary School with private money, and have run it in the black for most of 18 years, based on very reasonable tuition. Consequently, I have long wondered about the sky-rocketing tuitions at colleges. I suspected that the schools were not being run efficiently and economically, like competitive businesses.

My research into the history and economics of U.S. colleges showed me the answer, which was an "aha!" moment: government money.

In the egalitarian attempt to insure that everyone get a college education, government grants and low-interest loans have fuelled rising prices, as well as credential inflation. Unfortunately as a result, too many college graduates are finding themselves selling video games and delivering pizzas while trying to pay off college loans.

All of this sounds to me like a market opportunity for a program that offers high quality individual development at a reasonable price - just what we at RIFI had in mind!

Student Interest

I hope you're pleased with our progress. I often hear from students and parents, highly dissatisfied with their education options. Students continue to contact me, asking when the college is opening, as well as professors interested in teaching at the College.

With very little marketing, we continue to gain interest; I'm excited to see what will happen once we have a full-blown marketing campaign.
