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October 15, 2015

To: Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni:

Since 1970, the Belk Tower on campus has served as an iconic symbol of a young and growing University. The Belk Tower was funded through a gift by Mr. Irwin Belk and his three brothers—John, Thomas, and Henderson—to create a central quad on the newly established campus.

Recent analyses conducted by University personnel and external consulting engineers suggest that the Tower has significant structural issues. Although the Tower is not an immediate risk to campus, it does pose a potential safety hazard and it is prudent to take precautions. The deterioration of the Tower is the natural result of age-related corrosion, water penetration, and rust that have damaged the Tower's concrete, metal, and electrical components.

The Tower has deteriorated to the point that estimates to restore it to a serviceable and safe condition approach \$1 million. In consultation with a unanimous Board of Trustees, I have determined that immediate steps must be taken to establish a pedestrian safety zone around the Tower with the erection of a construction fence. That fence will remain in place until the holiday break in December when we expect the Tower to be dismantled.

Removal of the Tower provides us with an opportunity to redesign the entire quadrangle formed by the surrounding buildings to create a more functional outside environment for rest, reflection, and conversation. With the assistance of a qualified landscape design firm, we envision a design exercise that will allow for broad participation and input from members of the campus community and alumni. Further details concerning this process will be announced after the selection of this firm later this semester. In recognition of the many acts of generosity bestowed upon the campus by the extended Belk Family, the Trustees have agreed that this area will henceforth be known as the Belk Plaza.

Surviving members of the Belk Family have been informed about this decision, understand the reasons for it, and are supportive of our moving forward in this way.

One of the remaining questions is whether small pieces of the Belk Tower can be made available to members of the campus community and alumni as mementos of the original structure. Because of the extra cost involved in taking such a step, we have created a survey instrument to gauge the interest in having such remembrances available for purchase. The survey can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BCX6WMZ> and will be open for response until November 1, 2015.

Sincerely,

Philip L. Dubois  
Chancellor