



March 18, 2011

Phyllis Wise
Interim President
University of Washington
Box 351230
Seattle, Washington 98195-1230

Dear President Wise:

We at the Arboretum Foundation recognize that the state budget crisis is requiring the University of Washington to take extraordinary measures to reduce its budget and we realize that all aspects of the University will see significant reductions. But, we read with alarm your letter to the legislature listing among the projected cuts: "Reduce or eliminate funding for the Washington Park Arboretum."

While the City of Seattle owns the Arboretum's land, and our Foundation provides major financial and volunteer support, the University owns and stewards its \$82 million collection of trees and shrubs. For the past 75 years, you have planted and cared for one of the best collections of woody plants in North America and maintained the curation records documenting it for the purposes of scientific research.

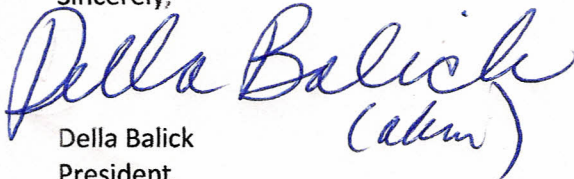
As your own letter to the legislature acknowledged, the Arboretum is a place of rare beauty and respite in our urban core, beloved by many thousands of citizens and University students and alumni. But, it is also the outdoor classroom where thousands of school children annually come to learn about the natural environment and hundreds of University students come to learn more about soil structures, hydrology, plant identification, and wetland environments.

And, it is your own amazing research laboratory, holding one of the nation's biggest and best collections of woody plants. As Scott Medbury of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden has said, it is especially noted for the continuity and depth of its documentation—making it a valuable source of data on issues such as the impact of climate change on trees. Surely, as more and more studies document the important role of urban green spaces in preserving public health, and as it becomes even more important to research and understand the impacts of climate change on our environment, the University cannot consider abandoning its stewardship of the Arboretum. To do so would be a terrible waste of a precious asset.

As the University has faced relentless budget cuts over the past several years, we have stepped up to provide you with more and more funds for the University's annual operations in the Arboretum. In the past four years, while you have cut, we have nearly doubled our support—so that it now matches the state's contribution. We, the Arboretum Foundation board and staff, stand ready to continue our support of the Arboretum and to work with you and the College of the Environment to secure its future. But, we need your continued commitment to our partnership.

We ask that you dedicate the mitigation money related to the Arboretum that will come from the future Sr520 project to providing a stable source of some operating funds for the Arboretum in the future, that you preserve funding in the FY12 budget for the necessary care and documentation of the tree collections, and that you work with us on a business plan to provide a sustainable financial future for the State of Washington's Arboretum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Della Balick" with a stylized flourish underneath that appears to say "(aka)".

Della Balick
President

cc: The Honorable Edward Murray
The Honorable Frank Chopp
Lisa Graumlich, Dean of the College of the Environment
Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation