March 24, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the AUCD Program Planning Committee, we are pleased to invite you to participate in the 2006 AUCD Annual Meeting and Conference. The event will be held October 29 – November 1, 2006 at the Renaissance Washington Hotel, Washington, DC. The theme of this year's Annual Meeting and Conference is:

**Forging New Partnerships for New Challenges Through Research, Education and Service**

The disability community is facing many of the same challenges that significantly influence and change the fiber of our nation as a whole. The AUCD’s network is called—if not required—to examine, create and enhance non-traditional partnerships for these new challenges facing our nation and communities. The Annual Meeting and Conference provides an opportunity to celebrate our partners and to explore how partnerships, networks and other formal and informal collaborations can help realize the vision of full participation of persons with disabilities and their families. Our real and potential partners include individuals with disabilities and their families; our universities and centers; state, international, national and local agencies; policymakers; advocates, and others who care about the current and future status of our nation and communities. Working with persons with disabilities and their families, we as university centers and as individuals have the ability to strengthen existing networks, leverage formal and informal collaborations and create new partnerships in research, education and service.

With the theme of the conference focusing on partnership, participants will have an opportunity to explore the AUCD network’s collaborative efforts in leadership; new and exemplary partnerships at the international, national, state, and local levels; policymaking initiatives; supports and services to families and individuals; and training and technical assistance as instruments of addressing change. You will hear from our federal agency partners, including details about new program initiatives and funding opportunities. You will also learn from other partners, traditional and new, in formal presentations and informal discussions and networking.
The theme for this year's conference is broad and allows emphases in diverse areas that foster alliances with new and non-traditional partners that promote research, education and service. We plan to explore topics that:

- Include partners across cultures, ethnicity, ages, disciplines, funding sources and disabilities
- Explore global, international and local strategic partnerships
- Cultivate leadership development of student trainees and others
- Involve multiple AUCD members and existing partners
- Highlight and include new partners or networks
- Demonstrate research-to-systems-change outcomes and best practices and skills
- Explore the changes and challenges of the future

We welcome participation from all segments of the AUCD network and their partners, including faculty, researchers, program directors and staff, graduate students, individuals with a disability and their family members, policymakers, administrators, and other advocates. We also ask you to help ensure full participation of all attendees by paying special attention to the accessibility guidelines and related resources available on the AUCD website at: [www.aucd.org/annual_meeting_2006](http://www.aucd.org/annual_meeting_2006).

The AUCD Annual Meeting and Conference is a special opportunity to share your interests, talents and perspectives with others in the network. The Planning Committee looks forward to your participation in the conference.

Sincerely,

Royal Walker, Jr., Chair
Conference Planning Planning Committee