As the 2010-2011 school year opens, the Columbia Engineering community is beginning to talk about plans for how the engineering family will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the School of Engineering and Applied Science. In addition to high-profile lectures, alumni gatherings and other events, Dean Fuensalis Peña-Mora is also leading the engineering community in an effort to encourage unprecedented investment in our engineering faculty, students, departments and facilities. The dean has announced that planning is underway for Columbia Engineering to have raise $150 million by the end of 2014, the year of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the School of Mines at Columbia University.

This effort builds on The Columbia Campaign, launched in 2006, which had raised over $100 million for faculty, programs, students, and facilities in engineering as of July 1, 2010. The 150 by 150 effort would extend the School of Engineering’s original campaign goal of raising $125 million by the end of 2011. Remarkably, in the last twelve months alone the School of Engineering has successfully raised over $25 million for endowed faculty positions, despite the continuing sluggishness of the global economy. “Many alumni are in a process of winnowing down the number of causes they are choosing to support in this economy,” said Associate Dean for Advancement Peggy Maher. “So the trend we are witnessing demonstrates that our alumni believe the School of Engineering and Applied Science is a truly essential institution worthy of their continued investment. This seems especially true as all sectors of our economy become increasingly reliant on technically proficient leaders and managers.”

Based on this track record of success, Dean Peña-Mora believes The Columbia Campaign for Engineering could achieve an ambitious target of raising $150 million by the end of 2014 in order to mark the sesquicentennial anniversary of the School. To maximize the impact of this initiative, the dean has targeted student-centered needs as the focus for this phase of the campaign for engineering. “We seek to educate the Columbia Engineering students in our classrooms today need to become the leaders in their fields for the next generation,” said Dean Peña-Mora. “So I am proposing that we set our sights on investing in them by committing to raise $50 million for student support and programs over the next three years. In this way, we can say that Columbia Engineering will achieve ‘150 by 150’ to consolidate our strengths and ensure another century and a half of engineering excellence.”

This proposed plan comes at a time of growing momentum at Columbia. Overall, through The Columbia Campaign, donors have given more than $3.7 billion to date for students, faculty, and programs across the University.