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UA3/9 2010 Spring Semester Midpoint Report

WKU President's Office

Gary Ransdell

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2010 Spring Semester Midpoint Report

faculty-all-bounces@lists.wku.edu [faculty-all-bounces@lists.wku.edu] on behalf of Gary Ransdell [gary.ransdell@wku.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 1:18 PM

To: faculty-all; staff-all

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

As we pass the midpoint of the spring semester, I want to communicate with you on five matters that reflect current or recent campus activity.

1. I know all of you share my appreciation for the hard work recently exhibited by our facilities staff and grounds crew during several winter storms over the last couple of months. Snow storms were more frequent this winter and our grounds and facilities staff was pressed into service extensively over a multi-week period where we had several storms in a row. Not only did our grounds crew do a great job of keeping our walks and streets clear of snow and ice, but our building service attendants did a magnificent job of keeping our lobbies and rooms free of chemicals and slush, which invariably is tracked through our buildings when winter weather is harsh. Good job to our colleagues in these important groups.
2. Many of you are following in the media the progress in Frankfort as the General Assembly seeks to prepare a budget for the 2010-2012 biennium. We have had considerable interaction with leadership in the House of Representatives to get us to a point where higher education is treated reasonably well in the House version of the budget. The House version limits the cut to higher education at about 1½ percent or at approximately \$1,100,000 for WKU. The budget has now gone to the Senate; therefore, our attention turns to Senate leadership. It will be a few more weeks until we know what we might expect as the General Assembly runs its course in April. Unfortunately, the House budget does not include funding for maintenance operations of new campus buildings, nor does it include support for increased costs to WKU for the Kentucky Retirement Systems. Other legislation including approval to award a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree and voting rights for instructors in Regents elections are still in play.
3. The final two candidates for Provost are on campus this week. I look forward to getting three names from the Provost Search Committee, from which I will have the opportunity to make a final decision. The Search Committee has done a superb job. The campus owes Sharon Mutter and her Committee a debt of gratitude for their extensive efforts over the last several months. It is my intention to name the new Provost by the end of April.
4. Many of you are aware that WKU has been named by officials of the Chinese government as a Confucius Institute. This is a prestigious designation for WKU. It will provide extensive upfront and annual funding as we will bring Chinese language instruction into the public schools and the Chinese culture into the business sector of Kentucky. We will have a small campus ceremony in April as we begin work on a large section of the ground floor of the Helm Library, which will physically house the Confucius Institute collections and interactive learning elements.
5. On April 26, we will welcome Mr. Ross Bjork to WKU as our new Director of Athletics. Ross comes to WKU from his duties as Senior Associate Athletic Director at UCLA. Prior to UCLA, Ross served in similar capacities at the University of Miami and the University of Missouri. He

started his career at WKU following the completion of his master's degree from Western Illinois University. Ross is a rising star in the Athletic Director profession and has prepared well for the opportunity to lead the WKU athletic program. He understands the integrated role which athletics must play in the academic, student development, and public life of a university.

Spring is arriving and we are all focused on completing the academic year in a successful manner. We will soon be into the numerous year-end events which characterize academic life on a college campus. Faculty and student achievements will be well recognized as we march toward commencement on May 15. Between now and then, however, I will be back in touch as we learn more about the state budget for next year and the final selection of a new Provost. Thank you.

Gary A. Ransdell

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