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UA3/10/2 Spring Semester Begins

WKU President's Office - Caboni

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues:

As we begin a new semester, a new year, and a new decade at WKU, I am pleased to share with you some of our continued student-success achievements.

First, our 2018-19 one-year retention rate of 72.9%, climbed to its highest point in five years. We also increased retention rates for underrepresented minority and low-income students.

Additionally, according to preliminary data, we retained our inaugural cohort of Summer Scholars at a 6% higher rate from fall to spring than last year for the same subset of students.

Second, we expect our 2019-20 six-year graduation rate to surpass our university's all-time record of 53.4%, and our four-year graduation rate continues trending upward, increasing to 40.1% in 2018-19 from 21.9% in 2008-09.

Finally, our students' average time to degree completion decreased to 4.05 years in 2018-19 from 4.28 years in 2008-09, and students graduating from WKU now do so with fewer credit hours - down to 136.3 from 139 hours five years ago.

These important data clearly represent an increase in student success at WKU. When students choose WKU, return in subsequent years and ultimately graduate, we achieve our primary mission – to transform the lives of our students. We shape them as individuals, and each of them leaves us prepared to make a good living and a good life.

This progress reaffirms the strength and direction of our university's strategic plan. It marks the collaborations across our campus. And it represents outcomes created by the tremendous work undertaken by our faculty and staff. Our shared work, challenging as it may be, continues to elevate our students and our university.

These efforts span the entire campus. Together, we are reimagining scholarships, refreshing our academic portfolio, creating innovative student support programs, (Summers Scholars, ISEC Academy, and the Burch Institute) and developing student engagement opportunities (centralized advising, the First Year Village, and the Opportunity Fund). We remain committed to bridging gaps, to removing barriers, and to providing personalized student services.

As we welcome our Hilltoppers back today, remember that our daily work remains critical to their achievements and ultimately to their graduation.

I hope you have a productive spring term.

Go Tops!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Caboni', written in a cursive style.

Timothy C. Caboni