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WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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WKU President's Announcement

February 25, 2016

Dear Friends:

We are approaching a lost decade of state funding for higher education in Kentucky, marked by state budget cuts of more than \$173 million since 2008, rising tuition, and flat compensation for our faculty and staff. For WKU alone, cuts have totaled \$15 million, and now we are facing a proposed nine percent cut, which is an additional \$6.7 million. It was difficult but understandable that universities would lose state funds during the Great Recession. But now, as state revenues are growing, I was shocked to learn last month that instead of investing in higher education, the proposed state budget would deliver higher education its largest budget cut in recent history.

I have spent much of the last few weeks meeting one-on-one with legislators in both the House and Senate and in ongoing discussions with Governor Bevin and his staff. Today I testified before the Kentucky House Budget Review Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. My message: **Eliminate the proposed nine percent cuts in state appropriations to Kentucky's public universities.**

As you know, I recently announced that I will retire from WKU next year. We all share pride in the transformation of WKU over the last 19 years. But as we've made great progress in many critical areas, support from the state has simply not kept pace. For example, in 1998, WKU's state appropriation was \$89.7 million. Today it is \$74.6 million, and that includes \$4.9 million to support the Gatton Academy of Math and Science. That's an astonishing decline in state support. To put it another way, state funding has declined by nearly \$3,000 per student at WKU since 1998, or one-third. Nationally, most states are reinvesting in higher education while Kentucky is retrenching further. In Tennessee, for example, the Governor has proposed spending an additional \$380 million for its universities.

I'm proud that our Student Government Association spent a day in Frankfort this week meeting with legislators to make their case for state support. My colleagues from across the state and I are working together to compel legislators to reconsider these devastating cuts. I now ask that you join us in this effort. **Please contact your state legislators to express support for higher education, and ask them to eliminate the proposed 9% cuts to universities.** On the heels of cuts over the last decade, these additional cuts will significantly impact our efforts to drive economic development, respond to workforce development needs, improve the quality of life in our region, and offer students meaningful opportunities for civic and community engagement.

You can call the legislative message line at **800-372-7181** or [click here](#) to find your legislator. Please tell them to eliminate proposed cuts to universities.

Thank you for all that you do to support WKU.

Go Tops!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary A. Ransdell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" and "R".

Gary A. Ransdell