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Four Matters

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

Two actions occurred in Frankfort last week that pertain to WKU:

1. The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled that the withdrawal of College and University Funds at the end of the last fiscal year was unauthorized in the absence of General Assembly approval. Therefore, the \$1,493,000 that was drawn from the WKU Reserve Fund to meet this obligation may now be returned to the campus. When it is received, it will be placed back into the Reserve Fund.

2. In the 2016 General Assembly, a Bill was passed authorizing the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to allow our public colleges and universities to join the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). Last Friday, CPE approved membership for Kentucky into SARA. This allows our Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) to support WKU distance programs that enroll students from other states without having to pay an authorization fee in those states to do so. An important point for Kentucky universities is that SARA membership also covers authorization in other SARA states for internships, practica, clinicals, and field experiences when students travel out of state to complete these. Becoming a SARA state also allows universities in other states to enroll students from Kentucky in distance programs and courses without having to pay a fee to do so. We favor membership in SARA because we believe we have the opportunity to enhance our online enrollments more than we might lose students to other institutions in other states, and we support our on-campus programs, made richer with extensive out-of-state internship, practicum, clinical, and field experiences. My compliments to Dr. Beth Laves and her DELO colleagues, and to Ms. Jennifer Smith in our office of Governmental Relations for their work to get the Bill passed last spring and to convince CPE on the importance of authorizing Kentucky's participation.

Fall Break Brunch:

Next Thursday, October 6, our Staff Council will once again celebrate the Fall Break Brunch in the Downing Student Union. Our Staff Council will be communicating with the campus staff in this regard shortly. Thursday and Friday of Fall Break will be casual days on campus while classes are not in session. My compliments to our Staff Council for coordinating this important event for WKU staff.

2016 Holiday Break:

The Administrative Council has reviewed the year-end calendar and has agreed to extend our 2016 Holiday Break by three days. The University will be closed on Wednesday, December 14, through Monday, January 2. We will return to work on Tuesday, January 3. Please know, however, that there are numerous essential services and timely operations across campus that must be performed during the holidays. We are grateful for the important work done by a number of employees who will be working for much of this 20-day period.

Thank you.

Gary Ransdell