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UA3/9/7 End of Semester Message

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End of Semester Message

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

On this last day of our fall 2016 semester, I want to wish all our faculty and staff a safe, warm, and pleasant holiday season. I hope you have the opportunity to get some rest, enjoy family and friends, and catch up on both personal and professional activities in your life.

Commencement

I want to thank all the faculty and staff who volunteered, helped orchestrate, and participated in last Saturday's Commencement ceremonies. Both the morning and afternoon ceremonies were exceedingly well orchestrated. I am grateful to Tiffany Robertson and her staff in the Office of the Registrar and everyone else who helped make these events so special for our graduating students and their families. Our Commencements continue to be a highlight of the WKU experience for everyone who participates. Once again, job well done!

Campus Conversations

I want to update the campus on some activities which have been unfolding since I communicated with you a few weeks ago with regard to our campus climate. With the help of Dr. Lynne Holland, Dean of Students and Chief Diversity Officer, we have been able to conduct several small and large discussions with key student groups across our campus community. I am hopeful that most across our campus understand our campus values, and the premium we place on dignity, respect, and embracement of everyone in our university family. We have tried to reinforce our strong resolve that every student is as important as any student on our campus. The conversations have been constructive, thoughtful, and I believe enlightening to all those who participated. I want to thank everyone who has been involved in any of these discussions for the genuine and heartfelt communication we have shared in recent weeks.

Performance Funding

I am pleased to report that we completed the process of creating a Performance Funding Model for higher education in Kentucky. The new model provides for an equitable distribution based on performance for the five percent of each university's budget which was sequestered at the end of the 2016 legislative session. WKU will get slightly more than what it put in to this fund because of our performance over a rolling average of the last three years. The Performance Funding Model measures degree productivity (degrees awarded per 100 FTE students), production of STEM+H degrees, degrees awarded to underrepresented minority populations, and low income students. It also measures credit hour production at 30-, 60-, and 90-hour intervals. It also takes into consideration the amount of square footage on our campus, maintenance and operation expenditures, as well as the portions of our budget spent on institutional and academic support. The model is scalable and can allocate from 5 percent to as much as 100 percent of the higher education budget based on campus performance. Two sectors were created for the model—one for the four-year institutions and one for KCTCS.

Last week I met with Governor Bevin to present the model to him. He was pleased with the work which the university presidents have put into creating this model over the last several months, and will begin the process of working with House and Senate leadership to craft a Bill which will authorize the Performance Funding Model and the distribution of some or all of future higher education funding in Kentucky. Once a Bill has been passed by the General Assembly, and the final statistical data is tabulated, I will ask the CPE staff to come to campus to do a presentation for our Board of Regents and any member of our faculty and staff who may wish to become more familiar with the Performance

Funding Model for Kentucky higher education. All of the campus presidents and the KCTCS president have signed a consensus document committing their support to the model that was presented to the Governor last week. I am confident that WKU will continue to compete well through this funding model going forward.

Boca Raton Bowl

Congratulations to our WKU football program for once again getting to a Bowl game. Go Toppers as we take on the University of Memphis on December 20 in the Boca Raton Bowl. We will be the only collegiate or pro game on that date, so we have the nation's attention. Beat Memphis!

Looking Forward to the Spring Semester

Thank you to each and every one of you—all of our faculty and staff—for a successful fall semester. We will be working hard as soon as we reconvene in January to ensure that we have a balanced budget given all of our enrollment and financial dynamics. I want to thank everyone in advance for your work to help us conduct successful Topper Orientation Programs throughout the spring semester. Thank you also for your ongoing efforts to work with our students to persist and to stay on track to graduate. Retention remains our biggest challenge at WKU, and we need everyone's continuing focus in this regard.

Again, happy holidays to everyone. Be safe and enjoy family and friends. We will be in touch in January.

Thank you!

Gary A. Ransdell



Gary A. Ransdell
President | Office of the President
Western Kentucky University