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New Semester

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

As we prepare to begin the 2017 spring semester, I want to thank everyone for what appears, by all counts, to have been a successful January term. We had January term enrollment of 2,257, divided among face-to-face, online, and study abroad learners. I also want to thank our Facilities crews for making sure our campus is safe and that we are prepared for whatever winter weather conditions come our way in the coming weeks.

Congratulations to Dr. Tim Caboni for his selection as the preferred candidate to be WKU's next President. I look forward, like everyone across campus, to meeting Tim and Kacy next week. The Board of Regents will indeed have important business to conduct when they meet on Friday.

A couple notes of congratulations are due the staff in our campus Passport office, headed by Marshall Gray, for a recent service award extended by the State Department. Also, congrats to Dr. Chris Groves for receiving China's highest international scientific award from China's President Xi Jinping in the Great Hall in Beijing.

One of the challenges of serving over a long period of time in any given position is the natural tendency to assume that everything is communicated thoughtfully and that we are on top of campus matters large and small. In the interest of effective communication, I want to remind everyone that there are two avenues for communicating matters of concern, things you may have observed, or things you would just like to have addressed. It has been a few years since I reminded the campus that Karl Laves serves as our faculty and staff Ombudsman. Karl is most objective and is a highly effective member of our Counseling Center staff. As our designated Ombudsman, he is there for any employee who has an employment-related matter that they would like to discuss. Karl can either offer advice and counsel, or at the direction of the concerned party, report it to an appropriate department or university officer to investigate. Karl can also be trusted to maintain complete confidentiality. Another option for all employees and departments is our Internal Auditing function. Ms. Jennifer Miller is our Internal Auditor. She is at your service with regard to looking into any campus operational concern. Jennifer has a direct line of communication with the Board of Regents, and can also be trusted to maintain confidentiality in the conduct of scheduled or unscheduled operational audits.

Attached is a straightforward financial summary that may be of value to faculty and staff. This is a summary that Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, Ann Mead, has put together. I will use this in a higher education finance presentation I am making to the Council on Postsecondary Education on February 2. It not only breaks our budget down in summary terms, but also highlights the amount of reduced spending we have endured from state mandates and internal, self-imposed reductions since 2008. I thought this might be helpful for anyone on our campus that wants to retain a general financial summary of our campus budget.

This spring semester promises to be an important period of time in our University's history. Not only will Julie and I be completing our formal service to WKU on June 30, but the Board of Regents will be working closely with the new President to ensure a smooth transition as he begins his service on July 1. Julie and I will experience a range of emotions over the next few months as we complete our service. There will be ample opportunities to say thank you to all of you with whom we have worked so closely over the years. Simultaneously, there will be opportunities to meet and welcome a new President as he prepares for his own service to WKU.

There will be a few things we will be tracking over the next month or two in Frankfort. A Higher Education Performance Funding Model, hopefully, becomes law in this session of the Kentucky General Assembly. We will also be studying other bills which affect higher education as they come before the 2017 General Assembly.

Let's have a great spring semester. I look forward to seeing you often.

Gary

Attachment