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UA3/9/7 New Chapter

WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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New Chapter

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

Since announcing my retirement from WKU early in 2016, I have assured most people with whom I have communicated that I was not ready to fully retire, and that I would like to have the opportunity to write one more chapter in my higher education career. I had and continue to have no intention of serving any other college or university, but I have explored the possibilities to remain in a leadership role within higher education. I am pleased to share with you, my colleagues at WKU, what that next chapter will be.

Earlier today, the Board of Directors of the Institute for Shipboard Education announced that I will be the next President for the Semester at Sea program. I have served on the Board of Trustees for the Institute for Shipboard Education, which operates the Semester at Sea program, for the last four years. The Board of Trustees and I have been in discussions about this opportunity for the last few months. A formal offer has been made, and I have accepted it. I will be succeeding Dr. Loren Crabtree, who has served as the Semester at Sea President since 2015. Loren had previously served as the Chancellor of the University of Tennessee. My new duties with Semester at Sea will begin on January 1, 2018.

The timeline is important because it allows me to stay with my plans for 2017. The important message to our campus community is that I am very much “all in” as the WKU President until June 30. There will be no distractions, or any reason to divide my attention. Dr. Crabtree will be the Semester at Sea President through December 31 of this year. Just as WKU can have only one President at a time, so will Semester at Sea have only one President at a time.

As the attached news release describes, the Semester at Sea program represents the world’s most unique, if not complete, study abroad program. It allows 600 plus students, mostly from American colleges and universities, to circumnavigate the globe each fall and each spring semester for 15 hours of credit earned from some of the best faculty across the U.S. and the globe. It blends two of my passions—advanced learning and globalization. From a WKU perspective, the Semester at Sea program has been an exciting option for our students for the last several years. We currently have 11 WKU students on the current Semester at Sea voyage, which puts WKU in the top 10 of U.S. universities sending students this spring.

I want to thank everyone in our campus community for remaining focused on the tasks at hand this spring. This fall, Julie and I will enjoy a few months to re-tool, re-engage as alumni, reflect on our 20 years of service to WKU, and prepare for this next opportunity. Thank you for your friendship.

Gary A. Ransdell
Attachment

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