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UA3/9/7 Changes In Research Administration

WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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Changes in Research Administration

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

In follow up to the recent campus communication from Dr. Gordon Baylis, I want to officially announce the referenced change in the senior administration at WKU. The Vice President for Research position has been eliminated from our executive level structure and the Administrative Council. A portion of the money saved with this action has gone toward balancing the current year’s campus budget. The remaining portion will be redirected to the Office of the Provost to recreate our research leadership going forward. As he stated, Dr. Baylis will be moving to a full-time faculty position in the Department of Psychological Sciences in Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

To be clear, this does not signal a de-emphasis of research at WKU, rather it signals a greater engagement of the Division of Academic Affairs in the management of research activity at WKU. With this action, undergraduate and graduate research will become a central function of Academic Affairs, reporting directly to the Provost. Effective immediately, the Provost will have signatory authority on research-related matters, and the Office of Sponsored Programs and other related research units will report to him.

I am asking Provost Emslie to form a working group to help recommend by April 1, 2015, a research structure which we will implement going forward. The intent is for our research activity to be more integrated with our academic mission. Once a new research infrastructure has been approved, the Provost will be free to fill the yet-to-be-determined lead research position for WKU. Whatever title is used going forward, the position will be part of Academic Affairs and will be at a salary level similar to a Dean rather than a Vice President.

In the interim, I have asked Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration Ann Mead to oversee the Center for Research and Development, duties with which she has been familiar in recent years. Ann will have full decision-making authority in matters related to our Center for Research and Development and its components. I am also asking the Dean of Ogden College of Science and Engineering, Dr. Cheryl Stevens, to serve as interim President of the WKU Research Foundation. I will be meeting with the Research Foundation Board of Directors as soon as possible to describe the process in the interim and seek input for the yet-to-be-determined structure in the future.

Both the Provost and I welcome any input or insight from any member of our faculty or staff in this regard. Thank you.

Gary A. Ransdell