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UA3/9/7 2014-15 Fiscal Year-End Message

WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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2014-15 Fiscal Year-End Message

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

As the 2014-15 fiscal year draws to a close on June 30, I wanted to update all of you on a few matters important to all of us.

**Budget and Enrollment**
The Board of Regents approved our operating budget for the next fiscal year beginning July 1 at a called meeting of the Board today. This was a difficult budget to balance, and I want to commend all of the Vice Presidents, Deans, and Department Heads for their efforts to make the necessary sacrifices to balance this budget and fund institutional obligations. Given the increased investment in scholarships for students entering WKU this fall, and because of more aggressive and thoughtful recruiting strategies on behalf of our Office of Recruitment and Admissions, we are cautiously optimistic that our undergraduate enrollment profile will be stronger this fall and include a measurable increase in first-time, full-time freshman. I am, however, still concerned about graduate enrollment. An ad hoc committee is addressing ways to strengthen graduate student quantity and quality. By addressing as many identifiable budget issues as possible in the aforementioned budget, I am hopeful that we may be able to return to a stable revenue profile generated from total enrollment in the coming year.

**State Higher Funding Model**
Progress is being made with regard to a higher education funding model for the 2016-18 State Biennial Budget. The new higher education model will be based on institutional performance which generally means degree productivity, relevant degree programs (graduate and STEM disciplines, underserved populations, etc.) and other quantitative measures currently being negotiated by the public university presidents. I will be sharing more about this model once it is finalized over the next few months. The intent is for all eight universities and KCTCS to focus on restoring as much of the cuts we have endured since 2008 as possible, knowing that an agreed-upon model will fairly distribute whatever is appropriated in the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly.

**New Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations**
I am pleased with the announcement of the appointment of a new Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations. Mr. Marc Archambault, formerly the Vice President for Development and Alumni at Utah Valley University and CEO of the UVU Foundation, begins his duties as our Vice President and President of the WKU Foundation on August 1. His résumé is attached.

**Staff Regent**
Congratulations to Dr. Tamela Smith on her election as Staff Regent. This will be Tamela’s second term on the Board as she completed her first term six years ago. Well done, Tamela!
**Title IX and EEO**
Following Huda Melky’s retirement, we have repositioned our Title IX Coordinator and EEO duties to report to Deborah Wilkins, our General Counsel. Given all of the legal and federal compliance dimensions of Title IX, we are filling the vacancy with an attorney who will serve as Assistant General Counsel, reporting to Deborah Wilkins.

**Research**
Congratulations to Dr. Larry Snyder for his appointment as Interim Associate Provost for Research & Creative Activity, and a hearty thank you to the Senate ad hoc Committee on Research, the Research Council Working Group, and numerous faculty and staff for their hard and thoughtful work over the past few months in restructuring our Research enterprise. Dr. Snyder has served WKU in a variety of roles over the past 25 years, including eleven in the Potter College dean’s office. He has considerable experience in bringing faculty together to achieve a high level of synergy; his chairing of the campus-wide Task Force that led to the new Colonnade program being an obvious example. We are fortunate that he is willing to assume this leadership role, working with Provost Emslie to sustain and enhance Research & Creative Activity as key components of our academic mission. In related restructuring, Senior Vice President Ann Mead will assume oversight of the Center for Research & Development, and we will be proposing to the WKURF Board that Dean Cheryl Stevens become the President of the WKU Research Foundation.

**Terminal Degrees and SACSCOC Classification**
Congratulations to the English Department for the addition of its MFA Program in Creative Writing and to the Psychology Department for the addition of its Doctor of Psychology (Psy D) degree. These additional credentials bring the number of terminal degree offerings at WKU to five, and further moves our SACSCOC Classification from level V to level VI, the highest level recognizing doctoral-granting institutions in the region.

**Convocation**
Finally, I encourage you to mark your calendars for Friday, August 21 for our annual opening Faculty and Staff convocation in Van Meter Auditorium. We will begin at 8 a.m. There will be lots to discuss at this once-a-year opportunity to bring faculty and staff together to get key information about the year just ended and the year we will be starting on this Friday before the first day of classes. We will celebrate our successes and take measure of our challenges during the coming year. I look forward to seeing you then.
In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer. Travel safely. As always, thank you for your efforts to provide a most pleasant working environment and for inspiring academic and student life support systems for our students.

Thank you.
Gary A. Ransdell

Attachment