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UA3/9 2010 Spring Semester Matters

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2010 Spring Semester Matters

faculty-all-bounces@lists.wku.edu [faculty-all-bounces@lists.wku.edu] on behalf of Gary Ransdell [Gary.Ransdell@wku.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2010 2:54 PM

To: faculty-all; staff-all

Attachments: Resolution re Education fo~1.doc (25 KB) ; Navitas News Release 011110.docx (13 KB)

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

Our January-term is proceeding well. All of our students will be back the week after next for the beginning of our spring 2010 semester. Before then, however, there are several important points that I want to share with you.

1. As promised, a draft of a scaled back strategic plan will be forwarded to you in a few days. Over the holidays, I was able to organize my notes from 57 faculty meetings conducted during the fall semester. Themes from those notes form the basis for priorities outlined in a simplified general campus road map. I have received feedback on the draft from our vice presidents, deans, and academic department heads. Feedback from those groups and hopefully from you, will allow us to make appropriate adjustments to the draft which I will then share with the Board of Regents at its meeting on January 27. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

2. I want to offer appreciation to Governor Beshear for his ongoing commitment to education. Governor Beshear has indicated frequently that he places a high priority on education, including higher education. In support of his resolve, his administration has utilized Federal Stimulus dollars to offset some significant cuts to our base state funding. As late as last week, he outlined the ways in which the state budget will be balanced this year. True to his word, he has continued to spare higher education from additional cuts. No one knows at this point what lies ahead as the Governor and Legislative leaders seek to prepare a state budget for the 2010-2012 biennium. The biggest challenge for us will be the manner in which the state deals with the loss of Federal Stimulus dollars in 2011. The Governor has indicated his intent to minimize the impact on higher education. Specifics will be forthcoming.

3. After discussing our Board of Regents meeting with Board chair Jim Meyer, we have decided to change the location of the winter 2010 Regents meeting from Frankfort to Bowling Green. Given the support being expressed for higher education, and given the inherent costs with conducting a Board meeting and Legislative reception in Frankfort, we have decided that the more prudent course of action would be to refrain from our normal practice of a Frankfort Board meeting at the beginning of the Legislative session. We are also canceling the Legislative reception, which we have traditionally hosted for the General Assembly at the outset of a Legislative session. The January 27 Board of Regents meeting, therefore, will be conducted in the normal fashion in the Martin Regents Room on campus. Our message of cautionary spending of limited resources has been well received by the Board and officials in Frankfort.

4. The 2010 General Assembly is, indeed, under way. Our primary intent is to protect as much base funding as possible. If, by some unexpected circumstance, funding for higher education materializes, we are satisfied with our position in the higher education funding formula. There is some discussion about capital projects, and it has yet to be determined whether capital projects will be included in this budget. If so, we will do all we can to secure funding for campus deferred maintenance, renovation of Thompson Complex Center Wing, the long-awaited building in Owensboro, and the Gordon Ford College of Business building. Those four things represent a lot of money, but it also represents our prioritization.

5. On Monday, we signed a contract with Navitas, an international student recruitment enterprise. Navitas will, by contract, bring academically strong international students to WKU. We are pleased with this opportunity to partner with Navitas. This partnership will facilitate the achievement of the “with international reach” portion of our vision for WKU. It will also assist the University financially with full paying out-of-state students.

6. The campus Sustainability Committee has prepared the attached sustainability resolution, which I am happy to endorse as part of our modified campus strategic plan. The principles outlined in this resolution are worthy of our campus commitment and important to the example we set as an environmentally responsible institution.

7. We open three buildings this month which have received extensive renovations over the last year or so. The Preston Center is now open and will be serving students, faculty, and staff going forward. Congratulations to our Preston Center staff. I hope our campus community enjoys these enhanced fitness facilities. We also opened Science and Technology Hall, and the Math department will be moving in over the next several days. The renovation of this classic old building will create significant new opportunities for the teaching and research activity of our math faculty and all those students taking math related general education courses. Finally, the new Van Meter Auditorium will be going through its final “punch list” as it prepares to open this spring. In this regard, the Office of Campus and Community Events will move into Van Meter next week. For campus planning purposes, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who want to reserve Van Meter Hall, the Faculty House, public areas of the Kentucky Building, and the Chandler Chapel (which will be dedicated in May) will work through the Campus and Community Events staff. Specifically, Rachel Goodman, 270-745-2497, will be the point of contact for reservations for people who want to use Van Meter, the Faculty House, the Kentucky Building, and the Chandler Chapel. Rachel and Jeff Younglove will ensure that all appropriate scheduling and preparations are in order.

The Navitas news release and the sustainability resolution are attached for your review.

Thank you in advance to all of you for what promises to be an important spring semester. All of our graduation and retention trend lines are positive. Keep up the good work for our students and for your fellow faculty and staff. Thank you.

Gary A. Ransdell

Attachments