

Provost Report to Faculty Senate March 2, 2020

Good afternoon everyone

I have just a few brief updates from Academic Affairs:

CPE Program Review

The long-anticipated two-day workshop with Gray & Associates on the CPE program review process will be held during the next 2 days. I appreciate the participation of the Faculty Senate Leadership in this review. At our Chief Academic Affairs Officers meeting on Friday, we saw a presentation from WKU about how they used the process to identify areas for growth as well as programs that required revision and, in some cases, suspension. I thought it was important to note that, while suspension was recommended for a number of programs, there was no impact on tenured faculty positions. Many of the programs recommended for suspension were outdated programs and concentrations. The review process was primarily used to refocus on programs that needed attention. My goal is to use a similar approach during our visit.

Enrollment Summit

Last week, we held a half-day meeting to follow up on the Enrollment Summit that took place in January. As you all know, we continue to be concerned with our overall declines in enrollment in general, and on campus enrollment, in particular. The enrollment data should be sobering to all of us. From 2001 through 2016, we saw our enrollment increase from a little under 15,000 students to almost 17,000. In the past three years, we have lost nearly everything we gained during that 15-year period. So the Gray program review comes at an opportune time. While much of the discussion around enrollment growth has been about transition more of our programs to an online format, we are also reviewing ways in which we might make higher education more affordable for students who wish to attend ECU. I'm currently in the process of reviewing applications for promotion and tenure and I'm always pleased to see so many of our faculty engaged in recruiting efforts. This will be an area of increasing importance for all of us and I appreciate the many contributions of our faculty to these efforts.

Associate Provost Search

The Associate Provost Search Committee is in the final stages of recommending candidates for campus visits. I expect that a list of candidates and schedule for visits will be announced later this week.

Corona Virus Update

I want to provide just a brief update on contingency plans for dealing with the corona virus, should that become necessary. We will continue to monitor all international travel and put in place any necessary restrictions that reflect changes to affected areas. It is important to remind everyone that there are no confirmed cases of corona virus in KY. But in staying with the strategy of hoping for the best and preparing for the worst, we all need to be thinking about how we might manage a worst-case scenario. With particular regard to academic affairs, this means thinking about how we might deliver courses in the event that we would need to close the campus for an extended period of time. Many of our sister institutions are looking at ways of how to best continue instruction, through the use of blackboard or other on-line resources, in the event that this becomes necessary. The advisory committee has set up a standing weekly meeting to monitor the situation. We are restricting travel to all counties listed on the CDC Level 3 Notice. We will continue to keep the campus community informed about contingencies for dealing with this situation.

Appointment of Interim Associate Dean of the Graduate School

Finally, I am pleased to announce that I've appointed Dr. Ryan Baggett to serve as Interim Associate Dean of the Graduate School. During the past year, it's been increasingly challenging to serve as both Provost and Graduate Dean. Ryan's appointment will provide much needed assistance as well as a regular presence to represent the Graduate School. I deeply appreciate his willingness to serve.