Faculty Regent Report  
October 7, 2019

Dear Senators,

Thank you for continuing to serve in your respective roles for your departments and for our university. Since the last senate meeting, the Board of Regents has not convened nor was scheduled to do so; however, there has been a fair amount of activity that I and many other regents have attended on behalf of our university and our Commonwealth. A recap of the highlights of those activities will be provided below; however, the most important topic of this report is to also convey engagement opportunities for our EKU faculty on crafting and/or understanding statewide strategic higher education policies and priorities.

Upcoming Engagement Opportunities
Major engagements that I plan to attend and where university faculty interested in statewide higher education policy or strategies are also most welcome to attend are as follows:

(1) **Wednesday, October 9th**, Return visit of Dr. Aaron Thompson, CPE President, as part of open forum/statewide Listening Tour as part of the “Higher Education Matters” agenda. The session is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are requested at [this link](#) and to learn more about the listening tour, visit the [CPE’s tour page here](#). The event will occur at 5 p.m. in the Perkins Building on Oct. 9th.

(2) **Thursday, November 14th**, The Higher ‘Edquity’ Symposium invitation was shared with all the regents and trustees statewide as well as all university leaders in attendance at a recent Governor’s Post-Secondary Education Conference, and the event is open to faculty, staff, and students. The symposium aims to support attendees in discovering new strategies that promote a greater number of culturally competent graduates while also improving diversity, equity and inclusion on our Kentucky campuses. Info on the three dynamic nationally-recognized academic speakers and the agenda are included [here](#), and the cost is free. *The event is at UK’s Gatton Student Center (8a-4:30p or as individual schedules permit). The call for proposals is still open (until Oct. 15) on the [webpage](#).*

(3) **Friday, November 8th**, The Gen1 Conference is here at EKU with a focus on first generation students in higher education. The list of presentations and broad range of speakers including keynote speakers are included at the [conference homepage](#). Registration closes on October 21.

Other Important Dates from the Board of Regents

(1) **The Board Innovation Fund** has a call for proposals for innovative ideas that may provide a financial return on EKU’s investment in the idea and/or project. The deadline is 5 p.m. this Friday, October 11th. The application is relatively simple and is available at the [EKU CEDET website here](#). Faculty, staff, and departments can apply.
Next Board of Regents Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the BoR is November 19th at 12:30 p.m. The planned location will be in Martin Hall. As details become available over the next month or so on committee meetings or agenda items, I’ll notify the senate.

Abbreviated List of Recent Activities as Faculty Regent

Although the regents have not had meetings, there have been important engagement/listening opportunities appropriate for my attendance (as well as several awards ceremonies for EKU alumni):

1. The 2019 Governor’s Symposium on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship & CPE Board Member Training (September 16 & 17 – Louisville, KY)
   a. View all materials here at this link

2. EKU Foundation Board & Committee Meetings and EKU Capital Campaign – Make No Little Plans Launch (September 26 & 27)
   a. Read more about the Campaign’s $40M already raised of the $50M goal and about the student speakers at the event here.

3. Meeting with EKU Chairs Association (along with Provost & Regent Makinen by invitation) on September 13

4. Meeting w/SGA on September 24

Major Highlights of Recent Activities

- Dinner with State Budget Director (John Chilton) & CPE President (Dr. Thompson): Following the board member training, I had the opportunity to hear from the state budget director regarding state revenues and there’s a strong likelihood that the state revenues will be up and such will afford the state some more wiggle room than in some previous years with regards to the state budget; however, there’s anticipated growth in healthcare-related state expenditures that may consume a lot. At present, there was no indication that the higher education budget would get cut further; however, there was no assurance given by the state budget director that there would be a priority to increase spending in higher education given competing state demands and priorities of the legislature and governor. The state budget director did indicate that some type of pension relief idea presented by CPE would be given consideration (but no assurances were given, as to be expected).
  - Following the state budget director’s remarks, the CPE president remarked the best way to truly have performance-based funding is to fully fund performance-based funding. Furthermore, following the dinner, and into the next day, Dr.
Thompson indicated that the CPE would not be advocating for funds for new building construction from the higher ed budget; however, priorities in possibly advocating (again) for a pension relief line item for regional universities, is something the CPE may advocate for again in their request. Additionally, asset preservation (and decreasing the state’s multibillion dollar deferred maintenance tab) will be an ongoing focus of CPE.

- **Making Advocacy a Part of Board Culture // Higher Education Matters:** The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) via Dr. Carol Cartwright (a long-tenured university president & AGB Board Consultant) coupled with Dr. Aaron Thompson’s messages were particularly pervasive throughout the conference. AGB and their Guardians Initiative challenges boards to “Reclaim the Public Trust” while Dr. Thompson is strongly advocating for higher education leaders (including faculty and staff) to speak more boldly and confidently about the value of higher education.
  - Dr. Thompson’s presentation, “Making the Case for Why Higher Education Matters,” is rich with Kentucky-specific data and such should make us not only proud of what we do as educators, but should also be more useful for us as we engage with students, families, and communities here in Kentucky. View his very visual Kentucky-centric presentation [here](#):  
  - For example, if someone says, “I can’t afford a college education”  
    - A reply may be: “You cannot afford not to have a college education”  
    - Across Kentucky, the median loan debt plus interest is $29,742  
    - Across KY, the median estimated ROI on a Bacc. Degree = $2.2M  
    - Across KY, the median estimated ROI on a HS Dipl/GED = $978,000

- **Performance-Based Funding Session:** During the performance-based funding session at the conference, Kentucky was identified as a tier-IV state for having a highly active/aggressive formula in place. In terms of supporting or encouraging universities to work towards enhancing success among low-income and underrepresented populations, the formula is encouraging universities to make great strides in these areas; however, upon some effective questioning, there was an acknowledgement that compared to other states, our retirement dilemma is unique in that it only affects part of the system in the formula. Again, the CPE leadership and policy makers indicated they would try to get a solution for this dilemma (again) in their budget request.

- **Remarkable Wealth of Kentucky Data and Infographics Resources**  
  - Engaged faculty should consider checking out the very data-rich CPE website.
    - Click here → CPE Data as interactive tools
    - Click here → CPE Infographics
    - See examples at end of this report
  - The site has been updated with dozens of infographics, Kentucky-oriented data, information on the cost of degrees, HS performance rates pertaining to college success, and much more.
  - Few states, if any, have such a wealth of information at their fingertips.
For example, many Kentucky H.S. graduates do not enroll in post-secondary education, and from a public policy standpoint in Kentucky, the data according to the state government is as follows: 75% of recent KY grads from H.S. are working in Kentucky. The median annual earnings of a H.S. grad in their year out are $9,503 as of 2018. In comparison, in federal loans, the average loan of the 20,469 Kentuckians enrolled in our colleges and universities, was $2,551.

Closing Reflections

During the last couple weeks, I have been reminded that we, the faculty of EKU, are on the front lines of providing hope and opportunity to many who may have a lot less on their horizons if we were not here. The alumni stories and recognitions coupled with the statistics have enhanced my awareness more fully. As salaries and state budgets struggle to assign value commensurate with the ROI of our work as much as may occur in other states, our relative cost of attendance for our students continues to remain far more affordable than adjacent states—especially among the four-year schools, and accordingly allows more folks presumably better opportunities. We even have the potential (based upon typical out-of-pocket costs in other states, like Ohio, to recruit more students to Kentucky given the new changes by CPE to allow lower tuition for out-of-state students. Kentucky can become the brain drain for other states).

Based upon the announcements and data from the CPE indicating we (the commonwealth of Kentucky) have decreased $487M in state spending per student over the last decade, I have since reflected upon that as if we have lost the equivalent of two universities from our system (EKU’s and Morehead’s budgets add up together to about $490M total). Despite such difficult cuts to our system, especially among regional universities, like us, we continue to persist. Not only do we persist, in fact, we are setting records in our graduation rates due to enhanced retention efforts from greater faculty and staff engagement, and accordingly, we remain the most efficient and effective architects of the middle class in Kentucky. In exploring the data as part of our Board’s strategic enrollment committee and with some urging to use the data by CPE, the most current data indicate we (EKU) continue to educate more low-income students than any other university in Kentucky. Through reclaiming public trust and working together with our other universities, I remain hopeful that we can convince policy makers to restore some of the losses while better recognizing the value of having a dedicated faculty that chooses to stay and locate in Kentucky. Regent Makinen is on the same page, and he has chosen to lead in this arena by convening with me a statewide group of staff and faculty regents to potentially enhance our ability to get this type of work done together to enhance the quality of life of our people.

Lastly, I thank you for your support and attached are some images and infographics that may be of interest from the CPE data/infographics pages. Should you have any questions or would like to talk with me, I can be reached at jason.marion@eku.edu or by cell at 513-317-9508.
Even with a decade of funding cuts, KY campuses provide more aid per student than state/federal sources combined

$3,408 Campus-funded grants and scholarships
$1,374 State-funded grants
$842 Pell and other federal grants

Over the last decade, Kentucky’s public campuses lost more than a third of state funding support per student, equating to a loss of $487 million. However, campuses continue to provide financial aid to help students and their families afford college. This availability of aid has helped keep net price at most public campuses relatively flat, but more state investment in higher education is needed, else the growth in the total cost of attendance will outpace the aid campuses can provide.

Source: IPEDS. Amounts are averages per FTE undergraduate student attending a Kentucky public institution, 2015-16; in constant 2016 dollars.
An example of the type of data available with the interactive charts can be viewed below in this breakdown of the typical out-of-pocket cost for a student with a reported $0-30,000 income while also including various types of financial aid.

Enrollment of 2017 H.S. graduates into Kentucky Universities.