

TO: The Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate
FROM: Senator Michael T. Benson
DATE: November 1, 2019
RE: November Campus Report

During my time at ECU, we have seen a number of leadership changes. Our University administration includes vice presidents representing several areas, each with a unique focus and requiring specialized skill sets. Of all the members comprising the President's Council, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost is the shepherd of our academic mission. This eminent role has been through several transitions recently, and I am pleased this semester to be able to remove the "interim" title held by our colleague Dr. Jerry Pogatshnik. He has agreed to hold this position through the 2020-21 academic year before transitioning into a well-earned retirement in June 2021.

He has proven to be a dedicated academic leader on our campus and I trust you join me in congratulating him on this continued appointment. There is no greater mission of our University than academic success and providing steady, thoughtful leadership in this area benefits both our students and our faculty. I appreciate Provost Pogatshnik's commitment and service in this position.

We have many other academic faculty who are doing great things. Honors from recent weeks include:

- ECU piano professor and director of the Foster Academy for Musical Excellence Dr. Rachel Taylor was awarded 2019 Teacher of the Year by the Kentucky Music Teachers Association (KMTA)
- Dr. Marcel Robles, Professor of Corporate Communication & Technology in the College of Business and Technology received the Fellow of ABC Award from the Association for Business Communication
- Dr. Amy Thieme, associate professor of Communication Studies, was presented the Excellence in the Art of Teaching Award at the 88th annual meeting of the Kentucky Communication Association (KCA)
- Dr. John Fitch III, professor of Broadcasting and Electronic Media/Film Techniques and Technology, was recognized by KCA with the Excellence in the Practice of the Communication Arts Award
- Department of Communication Senior Lecturer Krista Kimmel was elected to a three-year term as KCA secretary and executive council member
- Dr. Qaisar Sultana, professor emeritus in the Department of Special Education received her fifth Fulbright Award

Congratulations on the outstanding work, it is always a great source of pride to recognize the scholarship and service of our dedicated faculty.

Thank you to our faculty, staff and students who led and participated in recent campus programs recognizing the diversity of our campus including events for Hispanic Heritage Month and the annual Diversity Breakfast. We are continuing to explore and enhance our campus culture related to diversity and inclusion. This month we are looking to finalize the structure of the newly formed President's Inclusive Excellence Advisory Council. We are seeking self-nominations to join committees focused on fostering an inclusive experience for our University community that includes an emphasis on:

- Campus Climate
- Inclusive Recruitment & Retention (students, faculty and staff)
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Academic Curriculum
- Inclusive Student Experience

The council is led by a Steering Committee of both faculty and staff representatives including:

President's Inclusive Excellence Advisory Council - Steering Committee Members

Co-Chairs: Dr. Abbey Poffenberger and Kristi Middleton

Dr. Melissa Bartsch

Betina Gardner

Dr. Wardell Johnson

Dr. Ida Kumoji

Dr. Tom Otieno

Dr. Socorro Zaragoza

Thank you to those already serving, and I hope many of you would consider joining these efforts as the call for additional committee members is distributed to campus soon.

As you might have recently seen, we have also formed a search committee for our next ECU Director of Athletics. Our student-athletes are not only seeking academic success but help foster a competitive spirit and source of campus pride for the broader community and our alumni, so this will be an important hire for the University. Thank you to Betina Gardner for agreeing to serve as chair of the search committee, as well as Faculty Athletic Representative Dr. Scotty Dunlap and Dr. Tom Otieno, Dr. Abbey Poffenberger and Dr. Timothy Wiggins who will all provide a faculty voice to the search process. We welcome Mark Sandy back to campus as he has agreed to exit retirement temporarily and serve in the interim A.D. role.

Also, admissions has been leading a whirlwind tour of high schools in our service regions. We have been to several local schools already to meet with students and alumni and will continue these face-to-face interactions to boost our recruitment efforts to identify future Colonels. It has been inspiring to hear our alumni working in the schools share what their Eastern experience has meant to them and answer questions about our academic programs for prospective students. This week's stops include a visit to George Rogers Clark High School in Winchester.

Finally, I remind you all to find time between your classes and other responsibilities to vote this Tuesday, November 5. As I wrote in a recent Richmond Register column, President Abraham Lincoln might have said it best, "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters." Please exercise your right to vote, and avoid the pain of inaction.