

Provost Report to Faculty Senate

April 5, 2021

My apologies to all for being unable to attend the April Faculty Senate meeting. The end of the Spring term always seems to be the busiest, but most rewarding time of year. Today is the beginning of Scholars' Week, which in addition to the activities that are outlined below, also includes the Phi Kappa Phi induction ceremony and the Annual Scholar's Assembly hosted by EKU Libraries. We are also closing in on finalizing a plan for the General Education Redesign and I'm excited about the new Faculty Development Initiative of EKU EngaGE to be offered thorough FCTL beginning in Fall 2021. Finally, I've like to call to your attention a few highlights from the KY State Science & Engineering Fair on March 27 and 28, along with some preliminary information on Spring Commencement. Additional details are outlined below.

Scholars' Week

Our annual Scholars' Week is taking place this week (April 5-9, 2021) and features the scholarly and creative work of faculty and students from across campus. Scholars' Week celebrates, showcases, and promotes the rich culture of faculty, student, and mentored scholarship, research, and creative endeavors across EKU.

This year, Scholars' Week includes our annual

- Faculty Awards and Recognitions Ceremony, featuring Noel Faculty Awards recipients in areas related to leadership, high-impact practice, innovation, and inclusive excellence; Critical Thinking and Critical Reading award recipients; and our first Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition winners and their faculty mentors;
- Interdisciplinary Faculty Symposium, featuring the scholarly work of faculty in areas related to Best Practices in Modern Teaching, 21st Century Innovations, Caring for the Commonwealth, and 2020 Vision: What We Learned and How We can Improve;
- Alumni Spotlight (featuring Dr. Derrick Morton, who received the Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from EKU in 2009);
- University Presentation (UP) Showcase, highlighting the research and creative endeavors of our undergraduate and graduate students, along with their faculty mentors;
- and concludes with the University Scholars Assembly, where student award recipients will be recognized.

You can access all sessions from the online version of the 2021 Scholars' Week program at ekuscholars.eku.edu/. We look forward to recognizing our outstanding scholars with you this year.

General Education Updates

The recommendations from the three Fall task forces were moved to an Implementation Team. That team has now identified the responsible parties for advancing the recommendations:

1. The General Education Committee will work to
 - a. examine and possibly revise the General Education mission
 - b. evaluate current goals and Element alignment
 - c. focus on the “real world” connections between General Education courses and students’ futures
 - d. highlight General Education teaching and learning in EKU’s communication structures.
 - e. develop General Education-branded materials for students, faculty, and staff
2. The General Education Skills Alignment Task Force recommendations will inform a project led by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs (Jennifer Wies). The goals of the project are to:
 - a. Elevate the awareness, engagement in, and reflection of transferrable skills (campus-wide)
 - b. Explain academic experiences using a common set of transferrable skills (students)
 - c. Meaningfully engage transferrable skills within General Education courses through alignment between skills and student learning outcomes (faculty)
 - d. Participate in discussions based on graduate experiences about the relationship between transferrable skills and disciplinary content (employers)
3. General Education Teaching Certification Task Force recommendations have guided the design of the EngaGE program, led by the Assistant Provost (Russell Carpenter), prepared for a phased approach to implementation beginning with phase I in Fall 2021. The EngaGE program will:
 1. Provide professional development programming related to teaching designed for all General Education faculty;
 2. Enhance resources and tools related to engaging and learner-centered teaching in General Education courses;
 3. Increase visibility of successful teaching in General Education courses through a new portfolio of faculty awards, each carrying university-wide recognition;
 4. Provide structured section- and course-level redesign programs that include incentives for successful implementation; and
 5. Provide structured programs to encourage faculty in the design and implementation of new or enhanced teaching approaches in General Education courses that include incentives for successful implementation.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Wies, Dr. Carpenter, all three GE Task Forces and the host of faculty who have been instrumental in this redesign project. Once fully implemented, these changes will benefit both students and faculty as we strengthen the foundation of all academic programs through our General Education curriculum

KY Science & Engineering Fair

During this previous weekend, ECU once again played host, virtually, to the KY State Science & Engineering Fair. I'd like to offer a special thank you to Faculty Regent, Dr. Jason Marion and to Ms. June Settle for their incredible work in organizing this showcase event once again.

Approximately 25 ECU faculty, staff and alumni served as judges for this year's event; all of the interviews with the students took place virtually. Next year will be the 20th annual event, again hosted by ECU. My thanks to everyone who helped make this year such a success and I know we all look forward to next year's event that will be held back on our campus.

Spring Commencement

Final preparations are underway for our Spring 2021 Commencement Ceremonies which are planning to be held in-person at Roy Kidd Stadium. Ceremonies will once again be hosted by the Colleges with 5 ceremonies to take place on Friday, May 7 and Saturday May 8. Please look for additional information in forthcoming updates from the President's Office.

As we approach our Spring Commencement, I hope all of us take a few moments to reflect back on what has truly been an amazing year. Our outstanding covid teams implemented a plan that guided us through the past year with minimal interruptions. The work of the faculty in adopting new technologies and teaching methods, and adapting to the needs of our students, has been nothing short of extraordinary. I want to offer my sincere thanks to all the faculty for their dedication and creativity that you all have demonstrated during the past academic year.

Jerry