

Faculty Regent Report to Faculty Senate

October 3, 2022

Dear Senators,

Since our last Faculty Senate meeting, the Board of Regents had a quarterly meeting on Friday, September 16. A summary of that meeting is provided below. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 1, 2022.

Summary of September 16th Board Meeting:

The Board of Regents met on September 16 at 9 a.m. in Walnut Hall of the Keen Johnson Building. The [Board Agenda](#) document is available on the Board Webpage. The Board agenda was much lighter than the June meeting. On the agenda were usual reports pertaining to updates related to (1) construction, (2) academic affairs, (3) university finances, (4) enrollment and the student experience, (5) development/fundraising and alumni relations, (6) athletics update, and (7) any committee reports from the Board. Brief reports were presented by Faculty Senate, Staff Council, SGA, President McFaddin, and Chair Eaves.

For action items on the agenda were the usual items (approval of prior meeting minutes, personnel actions, and Fall 2022 degree candidates). Some noteworthy items are listed below:

Noteworthy Agenda Items:

The items that were relatively new for the Fall Quarterly Board of Regents meeting include the following:

Item IV-E on the Agenda: Recommendation for Approval of the Asset Preservation Projects

In total, \$35,000,000 will be spent using the General Fund appropriation to ECU for this purpose. An outlay is provided in the Board Book on pdf page 41 ([linked directly here](#)). Specific details documenting specific locations/buildings where the funds will go could not be provided; however overarching areas for spending funds were provided. A substantial portion of the funds will be allocated to upgrades related to HVAC, water, plumbing, cooling towers, chillers, etc. Upon some discussion with the Board, there was an indication from the University that a summary of the work that will be completed will be provided, including which buildings and areas were serviced by this state allocation. There is hope, and a desire, for ECU along with all the public universities to request furtherance of these types funds in the next biennium as the two-year allocation in this biennium, while helpful, will not address the far greater deferred maintenance costs at ECU and the other universities.

Item IV-F on the Agenda: Recommendation for Approval and Ratification of the Football Field Naming Agreement. The Board approved a naming rights agreement for the football field at ECU. The \$1.15M agreement has named the field, CG Bank field, located at Roy Kidd Stadium, for eleven years. Some news stories on the naming agreement went out the day of the announcement, one of which is [linked here to a WEKU story](#).

Item VIII on the Agenda: Appointment of Ad Hoc Committee on Board Governance & Evaluation. Chair Eaves appointed a committee including Regent Ashley Ward, Staff Regent Jeremiah Duerson, Student Regent Paige Murphy, and the Faculty Regent (me) as Chair, to align our regulatory evaluation duties

prescribed by state statute with best practices in presidential assessments and university governing board self-assessments. The process is likely to yield a more efficient and useful annual evaluations for the Board itself and the President, while laying the groundwork for a future comprehensive evaluation that aligns with the current strategic plan versus the expired plan.

Informational Updates:

A [Construction Update](#) was provided by Dr. Byran Makinen detailing completed, on-going, and some future projects. Information was provided on the two state budget-appropriated projects (Model Lab School [\$94M] and Alumni Coliseum [\$31.35M]). Additionally, \$54M in housing bond projects (using ECU's housing funds) to renovate Keene Hall, Palmer Hall, Sullivan Hall, and Burnham Hall are underway. The extent of the substantial renovations will keep our available housing capacity at capacity or may exceed capacity as the demand for ECU housing remains high and as enrollment increases in the on-campus underclassmen populations. The bonded projects took advantage of favorable rates to do desperately needed renovations. In addition to ongoing projects, particular attention was given to the relocation and enhancement of the Veteran's Memorial coupled with the Powell Plaza Phase 1 enhancement. The Veteran's Memorial Plaza is moving to the Carloftis Garden and will be more attractive and more conducive to enabling access to the space for everyone (alumni, community, students, and others) for reflection and ongoing memorialization.

The [Financial Update](#) indicated that university was on budget for this year and is maintaining a solid financial position for this fiscal year due to increased enrollment- and housing-related revenue and from some modest increases in state support.

An [Academic Affairs update](#) was provided by Provost Zeigler. The update oriented the Board to the current profile of ECU's academic leadership, notably the deans, as there have been a number of newly appointed deans in the last year. Notable activities of each college were presented by the Provost, and particularly exciting for the Board, were the Provost's presentation of ECU Faculty Highlights. Professors David Fifer and Carter Sickels were highlighted. Specifically, Professor Fifer was recognized for his roles with helicopter rescue operations during the floods in Eastern Kentucky and his growing reputation in the field of wilderness medicine and tactical rescue from the Red River Gorge and beyond. Professor Sickels was recognized for his 2021 novel, *The Prettiest Star*, which won the Southern Book Prize and the Weatherford Award. Additional information pertaining to student spotlights and ECU's sponsored awards were also presented, which included ECU having received \$29M in new sponsored award funding across 71 new awards.

The [Student Success & Student Life Update](#) was provided by Drs. Tanlee Wasson and Dannie Moore. Overall, enrollment increased to 14,238 representing a 2% increase year-over-year. Within that increase was a 12% increase in underrepresented minority (URM) students. There was also a 4.2% increase in e-campus enrollment. Freshmen enrollment increased 9% year-over-year to 2,765. Retention is also up, now at 77.6% retention, this is up 4% year-over-year and near the all-time high freshmen-sophomore retention rate. More details, including a couple videos, were presented to the Board showcasing the Big E Welcome events and other orientation programs. Included in the update were a description of some of the on-going activities to foster community within the student population and to give students a sense of belonging worthy of celebration among their peers. There's enthusiasm that ECU can eclipse 3,000 freshmen students in Fall 2023 building upon investments and successes from BookSmart, increased college recruitment efforts, and the palpable excitement associated with the Exceptional Eastern Experience (E3) programming that is ongoing.

The [Development Update](#) from Vice President Betina Gardner spotlighted the *Make No Little Plans* Capital Campaign which finished with a grand total of \$61M which surpassed the \$50M goal. Overall, there were 27,699 donors, including 11,694 new donors. Special attention was given to the 209% increase in faculty/staff (employee) giving during the campaign. Also, noteworthy were food donations and cash donations to the EKU SAFE fund (Student Assistance Fund for Eastern), which has helped students during the Pandemic, with unusual challenges (like home fires) or attending EKU following the devastating floods in our service region.

Athletics Update: Athletic Director Matt Roan presented an update for the Department of Athletics including points of pride for the various athletic teams, including the football program being in the Top-25 rankings. Season ticket sales and revenue have continued to increase the last several years, with 2021 surpassing 2017 sales. Projections are positive for 2022. Alumni Coliseum renovations are to start following basketball season in March 2023 with occupancy in the renovated facility expected in September 2024.

Information from Council on Post-Secondary Education (CPE):

The regents and trustees from all of Kentucky's institutions attended the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Trusteeship Conference. A wealth of information is available in the slides presented at that meeting, all of which is available on [the CPE's Trusteeship Conference page](#).

The CPE will be hosting the [4th annual Higher EDequity Symposium](#) this November 14-15 at NKU, and is currently welcoming proposals.

Closing:

As the Board meeting finished, Chair Eaves enabled time for Regents to share thoughts. Part of my comments were related to the Board and leadership remaining cognizant of cost-of-living in the university's region and the value of having a retained quality faculty and staff. The Chair and Board are committed with the President to continue to build upon progress made thus far as resources permit, and we are optimistic for enhanced state, CPE, and enrollment support. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service to you and the faculty. If you have any questions or recommendations for me to consider, you may let me know by email (jason.marion@eku.edu) or by phone (513-317-9508).

Respectfully submitted,
Jason