Presentation at the University of Guadalajara

I was pleased to represent EKU at the University of Guadalajara conference on Thursday and Friday. I received the invitation to attend (at their expense) to present how EKU’s focus on student-learning outcomes led to our receiving the 2014 CHEA Award. I always appreciate an opportunity to brag about EKU and our faculty.

Also participating at the conference were Mexico’s leading accrediting agencies, including the chief agency COPAES (comparable to CHEA in the US). Following my presentation, I was invited to share about our Assurance of Learning Day at the annual ABET (Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology) Symposium in 2016.

While I had a great experience at the conference, the date unfortunately conflicted with Dr. Saundra McGuire’s visit to EKU. She and I communicated several times last week, so I know she was given a warm EKU welcome.

Dr. Saundra McGuire

My thanks to all the faculty, students, and staff who attended Dr. Saundra McGuire’s workshops. Almost 1,700 students heard her speak in Brock on Thursday night. A few students had to be turned away due to the fire code. We also had approximately 300 faculty who participated in the workshops on Friday.

Here’s an email response one student sent Dr. McGuire after he heard her lecture Thursday evening.

"Dr. McGuire, I just wanted to express my thanks for taking your time to help me better my educational experience during my time at college. The strategies that you taught me will greatly improve my ability to be more productive and be more successful. As a matter of fact, I tried your reading strategy as soon as your lecture finished and I immediately noticed a difference and I am excited to get better at it in the future. Again, I just wanted to say thank you very much for speaking at my school, and I look forward to performing better during my time here at EKU."

This student’s reaction and appreciation about learning how to improve his reading is precisely what we hope to accomplish as we pursue a new QEP. We will continue the conversation about metacognition.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Rusty Carpenter who helped mobilize our campus to meet with Dr. McGuire. Thanks to all the faculty and staff who encouraged students and/or attended the workshops. As a result of our campus-wide effort, Dr. McGuire said EKU had done more to promote metacognition and her visit than any other school—which is impressive, given she is a nationally sought-after speaker. Way to go, EKU!

The Library now has a copy of Dr. McGuire’s recently published book, Teach Students How to Learn, for those who want to learn more about metacognition and her strategies.

The Honors Program

As you may recall, last year when we began a conversation about transiting to an Honors College, we scheduled a number of meetings to discuss the reason for the transition. Basically, those conversations centered around our having one of the premiere (even the top) programs nationally and one that deserves to be elevated to a comparable level of our national peers. To allow for those conversations, we delayed starting a search for either a dean or an executive director.

This semester we asked two experienced consultants to review our program holistically, identifying our strengths and any areas for improvement. Both of these consultants have served previously as president of the NCHC (National Council of Honors Colleges) and currently lead their respective honors program.
Their review was timely, given our Honors Program had not had an external review since Dr. Bonnie Gray was the director. The consultants’ complete report will be posted on the Honors’ home page.

Their review was quite thorough, covering student enrollment, curriculum, administrative infrastructure, facilities, budget, etc. They also met with the key stakeholders of Honors: the Honors Advisory Council, Honors faculty, Honors students, Honors alumni, the Chairs’ Association, and the Deans—as well as interviewing the President and me.

Overall, their evaluation of our program was positive—particularly regarding the commitment of the Honors faculty and our team-taught curriculum, which is unique from any program they are aware of nationally. However, they were less than positive about the facilities, which was not a surprise. The Honors facilities will be considered as the campus master plan is being developed. They also expressed a need for more administrative support as the enrollment increases.

Regarding an Honors College, they reported hearing both support as well as some concern among some faculty and department chairs. The concern was primarily two-fold. On one hand, concern was expressed that an honors college would be in name only as some of our peers have done. On the other hand, concern was expressed about increasing the number of administrators.

As we move forward under our new Strategic Plan to make “no little plans,” and after considering all the conversations and information, the President and I agree the time has come to transition to an Honors College with a Dean. For the success of Honors, it is important to give the Honors Dean a voice at the Deans’ Council as well as to provide him or her the opportunity to engage in the Deans’ collaborative decisions. Being cognizant of the concern regarding increased administrative staff, we plan for the initial change to be in the director’s position. As the enrollment grows, we will re-evaluate.

The members of the Search Committee for the Dean of the Honors College will be selected and announced this week. The Committee will include a representative from the Honors Advisory Council, the Honors faculty, Honors students, Honors alumni, and a department chair. Other faculty will be added as needed to ensure each college has a representative. Dean Jerry Pogatshnik will chair the Search Committee.

My thanks to Dr. David Coleman for serving as interim director of the Honors Program for two years and for being dedicated and diligent in keeping our program healthy and nationally prominent.

**Other Important Academic Affairs’ Conversations**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location/Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 3</td>
<td>Noon – 1:00</td>
<td>The International Faculty Luncheon, Board of Regents Dining Room, Powell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 5</td>
<td>1:30-2:30</td>
<td>Academic Calendar Discussion, Martin Room, Coates</td>
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<td>Friday, November 6</td>
<td>1:30-2:30</td>
<td>STEM-H Workgroup, Martin Room, Coates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, November 9</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>CPE Inaugural Diversity Summit, KCTCS Office, Versailles</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 11</td>
<td>Dr. Pam Petty, WKU</td>
<td>to visit with Deans/Associate Deans, the QEP Design Team, and the Faculty Innovators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, November 12</td>
<td>2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Developmental Education Workgroups report progress to the Larger group, Martin Room, Coates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, November 19</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Council on Academic Affairs, Martin Room, Coates (discussion regarding Academic Regalia)</td>
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Invitation to Lunch

From time to time, the issue of shared governance is raised regarding how decisions are made in Academic Affairs. The question is a fair one. I believe the essence of shared governance begins with open conversation. To foster that conversation, we schedule meetings, forums, reports—whatever seems most appropriate for the issue at hand in order to provide opportunity for dialog.

Yet, because the academic year moves at a rapid pace, communicating in a timely manner is often challenging. I am committed to making a more deliberate effort to communicate with faculty at large on a regular basis.

Providing Faculty Senators, particularly, an informal time to discuss items of interest or concern has been a priority for me since I became provost—thus the reason for the invitation to lunch on Wednesday following the Senate meeting on Monday. However, this time slot is not conducive to everyone’s schedule and may explain why the number meeting with me is small, to sometimes none.

I would appreciate your feedback/suggestions if another time/venue would be more suitable than the monthly Wednesday luncheons in September, October, November, February, March, and April.

For this month, we will continue with the luncheon as usual this Wednesday (the 4th) from 12:00-1:00. If your schedule permits, please join me and we can discuss the schedule and whatever topic you would like to raise. For those new to the Senate, we meet in or near the Faculty Dining Room in Powell. Sign in with either cashier.

Respectfully,

Janna Vice