Last week, I attended EAB’s Academic Affairs Forum in Washington, D.C., which focused on two main themes:

**Cross-Disciplinary Advancement and Governance**
The first major theme was emerging efforts at universities to create broader divisions of faculty groups with similarities working collaboratively to advance interdisciplinary skills for future societal needs. There is a growing trend in interdisciplinary degrees and administrative structures as universities strive to foster both disciplinary knowledge and broader humanitarian skills in tomorrow’s thinkers and workers. Some examples include adaptive spaces and cross-collaborative faculty groups that target teaching and research interests. Early experiments include migration to cross-disciplinary governance as a way to engage broader faculty groups in administration. Collaboration and efficiency are increasingly important across the country as universities respond to changing needs for today’s learners and enhance student success with decreasing external support.

**Reducing Demographic Disparities and Achievement Gaps**
EAB’s second major theme this year involved research to help universities identify practices and policies that create demographic disparities in academic performance, student engagement, and post-graduate success. From pre-college academic preparation through post-graduate follow-through, there are an astonishing number of opportunities for at-risk students to encounter barriers to success, and simply looking at the most common student success metrics – retention, graduation, and post-graduate outcomes – may not help guide effective change. When metrics such as first-year retention rates, term-to-term persistence, DFW rates, and four- and six-year graduation rates are analyzed for our most at-risk demographic populations, we can begin to understand how institutional policies and practices may be promoting inequity and impacting students’ sense of belonging. Universities were challenged to drill further down into their data and identify solutions to reduce barriers to success for their unique student populations.

**Assurance of Learning Day**
EAB’s focus on the concept of meaningful change is something we’re already very familiar with at EKU. Our previous provost, Janna Vice, often quoted Tom Sugar (from Complete College of America) in saying, “Access without success is an empty promise – and a missed opportunity with severe economic consequences...” As many of you know, Assurance of Learning Day was originally implemented by Dr. Vice as a way to promote student success by dedicating a day for all faculty to engage in a data-driven discussion of ways to enhance student learning in their programs. We just completed our 7th annual Assurance of Learning Day last Friday, and I was pleased to visit with some of your departments and programs and see all of the hard work you’re doing to ensure success in our programs. Thanks to all of our faculty for another productive Assurance of Learning Day.

**4th-Week Report**
Overall participation in the 4th-Week Report has hovered above 75 percent for the past five semesters, and 76 percent of undergraduate CRNs reported for Fall 2018. I would particularly like to acknowledge those departments reporting at or above 90 percent of their CRNs. Thanks to all faculty who participated in this early intervention best practice!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Department/Unit</th>
<th>% CRNS Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CJS</td>
<td>Fire Protection &amp; Paramedicine Sciences</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHS</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Park Administration</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHS</td>
<td>Health Promotion &amp; Administration</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Statistics</td>
<td>90.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The 4th-Week Report is “best practice” to enhance early problem detection and connect students with academic support services and intervention strategies. While EKU’s participation rate is generally positive, there is still room to build on our success. Student progress by the fourth week goes unreported for nearly a quarter of undergraduate CRNs, meaning that more of our students could be receiving the early intervention they need to succeed.

**Posters-at-the-Capitol (P@C): Call for Abstracts**
The deadline for students to submit their abstracts to the Posters-at-the-Capitol (P@C) is October 12, 2018. The P@C is hosted collaboratively by Kentucky state institutions to help members of the Kentucky Legislative System and the Governor gain a better understanding of the importance of involving undergraduates in research, scholarly, and creative work. Faculty are encouraged to have their students submit an abstract to the P@C. Selected students will participate in the event held at the State Capitol in Frankfort to help those in Kentucky who fund higher education understand why these experiences are so important.

Poster presentations are sought from undergraduates in *all disciplinary areas*. Posters-at-the-Capitol will be held on February 21, 2019. Please go to the following site to submit poster abstracts: [http://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/postersatthecapitol/](http://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/postersatthecapitol/) then click “Submit Undergraduate Poster Abstract” in the Author Corner menu on the left.

**EKU Honors: Call for Course Proposals for 2019-2020**
An ongoing goal of the EKU Honors program is to provide outstanding EKU faculty an opportunity to experiment with innovative pedagogies and creative interdisciplinary courses, energizing pedagogical innovation and excellence campus-wide. To that end, the Honors Program seeks innovative proposals for honors interdisciplinary seminars for the 2019-2020 academic year. Honors seminar proposals are due to Honors Program Director, Dr. David Coleman, by Friday, October 19.

Faculty from all EKU colleges are encouraged to consider either individual proposals or creative team-teaching proposals with colleagues from other disciplines. For further information and questions regarding Honors teaching or the proposal process, contact Professor David Coleman at [david.coleman@eku.edu](mailto:david.coleman@eku.edu).

**EKU Forward**
Finally, I commend Senator Matt Winslow and each of you on the “EKU Forward” initiative. EKU Forward presents an exciting pathway to focus energy on academic quality and develop collaborative strategies to complete critical work throughout all aspects of faculty engagement and student success. EKU will benefit from the interdisciplinary, innovative ideas this think-tank initiative produces. What better group to analyze and innovate for our programs, students, and emerging structure in this era of higher education’s evolution! I look forward to seeing faculty engage in this new initiative.

Respectfully,

Deborah Whitehouse
**Important Dates**

Please mark the following upcoming dates on your calendars:

- **October 12** – Posters-at-the-Capitol Abstract Submission Deadline ([http://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/postersatthecapitol/](http://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/postersatthecapitol/))
- **October 19** – 2019-2020 Honors Course Proposals due to Dr. David Coleman
- **November 1** – Application deadline for the 2019 Faculty Leadership Institute ([https://studio.eku.edu/faculty-leadership-institute](https://studio.eku.edu/faculty-leadership-institute))
- **December 5** – 2018 Showcase of Teaching & Learning Innovations
- **February 21, 2019** – Posters-at-the-Capitol