

## Faculty Regent Report to Faculty Senate

04 May 2020

Dear Senators,

Thank you for representing your departments as senators and staying active with your committees. Many of you are doing so while enduring some of the most time-intensive instructional endeavors you may have ever embarked upon. Our efforts are collectively tied together for not only enhancing the lives of our students, but also for protecting the life and health of our university and university community.

In the days, weeks, months, and even years ahead, our university will be changed by our current circumstances. In the midst of this change, which may require rapid action at times, please know you can always email or call me so that I can be more effective in my role.

**Upcoming Board Meeting:** Since our last senate meeting, the Board of Regents has not met. The next meeting is planned for June 4, 2020. The meeting may occur via Zoom in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order and the Attorney General's opinion on how to conduct open meetings in this environment. I'll share meeting information to the faculty at-large as they become available with respect to the agenda, time, and place/mode of meeting.

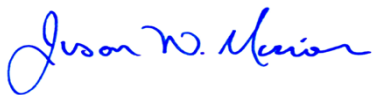
**Our Purpose & Uncertainty in the State Budget:** Moving forward, I'm reminded of our [institution's mission](#) and the [legislature's stated purpose](#) for our university and the other universities around the Commonwealth. No matter what change may bring, may we look to our mission and our historical unchanged statutory mandate that pre-dates 1942 for guidance in how to proceed. As a public institution that receives substantially less public support than in previous decades, we are more dependent upon enrollment than ever before; however, negative shifts in either category will impact us. The taxpayers through the state government provide the university with over \$60 million. More uncertainty than usual remains in how our current state budget will be impacted and/or modified by our current and future events. The state budget director's [recent quarterly economic report](#) presents potential impacts on this fiscal year and beyond. Without any additional federal intervention or state legislative action to raise state revenues, our university budget will rely even more on enrollment along with other institutional measures if we are to maintain. Any review of media reports around the nation show similar challenges facing universities of all types for a multitude of reasons with some private and research universities being hit harder in the immediate due to more reliance on endowment, hospital, and athletics revenues.

**Your Input is Welcome on Adaptation Approaches:** Moving forward, adaptation with an intentional effort to be nimble while protecting the health and safety of our community will impact our ability to weather these times or to even excel in this landscape. If you have suggestions on processes that would better enable us to adapt while supporting shared governance in such a way, please let me know. Possibly you, along with many of your colleagues, are actively involved in the substantial contingency planning and adaptation work currently occurring through a variety of committees and task forces. Maintaining our focus on protecting our university community's health, safety, and our core purpose remain paramount.

**Remembering and Acknowledging those in our University Community:** As we carry on, may we keep the 60 furloughed ECU community members and their families in our hearts and on our minds as they endure through the challenges associated with the recent changes in our university's operations due to the current pandemic. University leadership made additional strides to ease this experience as much as possible by applying for the enhanced unemployment benefits for them through a group application on their behalf. Additionally, the administration coordinated a plan that ensures these folks would retain their health insurance and tuition benefit through the duration of that challenging time. The term has brought many challenges including the losses of two of our dear faculty colleagues and dear friends. As I messaged the whole university community last week, may we all strive to bring the kind of loving light that both Dr. Sheila Pressley and Dr. Sherwood Thompson provided to us.

In closing, I commend you for your efforts and your perseverance. Our future and uncertainty may bring unimaginable and unavoidable challenges that will weigh on us all. For some, if not many of us, the future weighs very heavy. We all have unique circumstances, perspectives and stories playing out in our lives. Through it all, and as we have been doing, may we continue to strive to be kindly affectionate one to another. Please know you may reach out to me anytime at [jason.marion@eku.edu](mailto:jason.marion@eku.edu) or 513-317-9508. As senators, your perspective is particularly valuable to me in my role.

Warmest regards and be well,



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