

Faculty Regent Report to Faculty Senate

February 7, 2022

Dear Senators,

The most recent meeting of the Board of Regents was on Thursday, December 9th in the Powell Building. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 25th. Since the last meeting occurred in-person, it is anticipated that this upcoming meeting will again be in-person. The agenda for the upcoming meeting will likely become available around February 18th.

Highlights from the December 9 meeting are as follows:

1. The Board approved the following: (1) \$1,000 Performance Distribution Payment, (2) \$500 Healthy You Vaccine Incentive Payment, (3) [Experience Excellence Strategic Plan](#), and (4) the return of men's and women's tennis as a sponsored sport.
 - For persons who have not yet received the vaccine incentive payment, the university encourages eligible vaccinated persons to upload their vaccination information before February 28. As of the December Board meeting, the university estimated at least 85% of full-time faculty and staff were vaccinated.
2. Other Updates from the Board Meeting:
 - Dr. Betina Gardner announced that the *Make No Little Plans* fundraising campaign exceeded its \$50 million goal at the end of June 2021.
 - Dr. Bryan Makinen indicated that Eastern Bypass Pedway should wrap up and open this semester and there's some ongoing planning/ideas on how to best update the Powell Plaza area.
3. Discussion/Acceptance of President's Performance Evaluation
 - A brief summary of the evaluation was provided. Overall, the President consistently was rated as being effective or very effective in overall performance across all constituency groups. The President along with his administration and the university at-large were commended for having the first increase in fall freshmen enrollment in six years, which was accomplished during his first year in the position. The President was consistently identified across all groups as being a highly effective and passionate representative of the university in all settings, especially government relations. The President's unique experiential authority to speak as a first-generation college graduate and EKV alumnus from Kentucky at-large and Appalachian Kentucky was deemed as an ongoing strength.
 - The Board recognized and shares a desire for market-competitive compensation for faculty and staff, and acknowledged the strides by the administration in this area. Overall, from July through December 2021, with the President's leadership, the university added \$5.1 million in employee compensation, and the President with Board support remains committed to making more progress in this area.
 - Overall, the review was favorable, and it was apparent the President has support from university boards, external stakeholders, faculty, staff and students.

4. Supporting/Supplemental Documents Received:

- [Annual Report 2020-2021](#), which summarizes the prior calendar year, is an excellent document for reflection of what was accomplished at the university in the midst of a pandemic.
- [The Economic Impact of Eastern Kentucky University: 2021](#) by Dr. James Maples, Kobe Perry, and Dr. James Blair, demonstrated the value of ECU to Kentucky and our local economy. The document provided a key finding, whereby the researchers estimate “ECU generates \$580.63 million dollars in university, student, and visitor expenditures each year, supporting over 6,600 jobs and \$247.01 million in labor income in Madison County and the region.” The document was also a true testament of the value of our faculty as the report was generated in-house by our colleagues for a fraction of the price such an important policy-impacting document would cost on the private market. Kudos to Dr. Maples and Dr. Blair and their student researcher (Kobe Perry) for representing the academic enterprise so effectively.

CPE Update: The CPE President, Dr. Aaron Thompson, will be giving a State of Higher Education address and leading a panel with Kentucky education leaders on Wednesday, February 9th at 11:30 a.m. No registration is necessary. More information is available at the [CPE webpage](#). The event will also be archived on the [CPE’s YouTube channel](#).

Lastly, members of the Board of Regents continue to monitor the legislative session and the Board has been kept apprised through the updates shared by the President with the campus community. The proposed investments in higher education this session are very significant; however, the budget discussions among legislators remain very fluid. On Thursday, February 10, Regents along with other university and local leaders will participate in Colonels at the Capitol whereby our community can collectively educate and support our legislative partners and state leaders with recognizing the importance of the proposed investments in Eastern Kentucky University and statewide higher education, not only for our local community, but also the citizenry, and the future of the Commonwealth.

Please know that if you have any questions regarding matters before or likely to come before the Board, or if you have suggestions for me, you may reach me by email (jason.marion@eku.edu) or phone (513-317-9508) at any time. Thank you for all of your ongoing support and wisdom.

Sincerely,
Jason