

MSU Faculty and Staff:

As our spring semester gets back to a start, we want to thank you for your efforts in making it a smooth one. There were the usual items to sort out, but seemingly no real insurmountable issues.

A few quick updates for our campus:

- Pensions – The pension issue continues to be a statewide discussion and pressure point for everyone, and puts a great deal of financial strain on all state University budgets. Currently, in the KERS pension system we pay .49 cents on every dollars of payroll to the pension system. Consequently, and starting in a few months, that .49 rises to .84 cents on every dollar of payroll – a 60-70% increase. In its sister pension system, the Teachers Retirement System, we pay around 15.85% on each dollar of payroll, a much more manageable rate but still significantly above some states.

Absent some changes at the state level on legislation around pensions we will have a very difficult time, as will other state universities, in absorbing the massive increase in costs. Likewise, in the pension debate there continues to be discussion of structural change, amounts paid by employees and employers, and the use of sick leave service credit. We have spent quite a bit of time working and educating legislators and the state budget office on the types of relief that we need, and will continue to do so.

- Laughlin/Wetherby – We are currently in the process of moving our volleyball courts and playing area from Wetherby to the old poolside of the AAC. This is primarily a result of Wetherby having significant challenges on its roof. Once the courts are moved to AAC we will likely begin to bring that building offline to save about \$175,000 from not having to maintain it and another couple of hundred thousand of not having to repair the roof. Similarly, Laughlin Health Building costs us about \$275,000 to maintain each year for heating and cooling, and we are exploring possibilities for that building as well. I mention these to let our campus know that if you have traditionally used these buildings in the past for events, you may want to begin looking at alternative locations. We would much rather reduce our facility maintenance costs of heating/cooling/repairs, etc. than to reduce in other areas.
- Spring Enrollment and Retention – We hope to have a decent evaluation of both of these in the next few weeks after we have passed the drop/add, refund, etc. dates.
- Martin Luther King Day – Please don't forget our MLK Day event on Monday, as well as the other associated events throughout next week. Our entire campus is invited to join us on Monday, January 21, at 6 p.m. in ADUC for a reception and march.

Many thanks for all you do and your dedication to MSU.

Jay Morgan