

June 17, 2021

MSU Faculty and Staff:

We hope that you are having a good summer, and it is refreshing to see our campus returning to normal operations. Our push over the next month and a half will be to host the numerous summer camps scheduled, and also prepare for a Fall semester that looks and feels more normal. Below are a few quick updates:

University Budget for 2021-2022:

The University will be ending this current academic/fiscal year in a solid financial position.

Our University Budget for 2021-2022 is also conservative in theme, prioritizes employee raises, maintains a low tuition rate, and hopefully keeps us moving forward in our quest for improvement in student success, performance funding, and rankings.

Today, our Board of Regents approved a 1.25% increase to undergraduate tuition for the next academic year. For the prior three years we have frozen undergraduate tuition 2 of the 3 years, and raised it 2.5% one year. So, over all, we are maintaining a low tuition pattern for our students and trying to be responsive to the needs of our region. Our Board also approved freezing graduate tuition for next year, as well as a freeze on housing rates. This will mark the 4th year in a row for a freeze on housing rates. Our facility fee will increase \$2.50 per credit hour.

As an added benefit for our employees, beginning January 1, 2022 and with the Calendar Year 2022 health care plan, the University will be covering what would have been a \$600.00 +/- increase to the employee portion of health insurance premiums. We felt strongly in covering this increase and not passing it along to our employees. There may come a day when we need to pass along some form of increase, but for the 2022 year plan we will absorb the increase.

Salary Notification Letters for 2021-2022:

Salary notification letters for the next year are being sent to your MSU email. If you do not receive a letter via email within 2-3 days, please contact Human Resources. Also, please pay attention to any signature or response needed on them, if applicable.

Tenure and Promotion:

Congratulations are in order for the following who were promoted to full professor:

Doug Chatham, Mathematics
Jenny Dearden, Health and Wellness
Donfeng Li, Art
Lisa Shannon, Social Work
Itza Zavala-Garrett, Spanish

The following received Emeritus Status:

Brent Rogers, Agriculture
Steven Reid, Geoscience
Edna Schack, Education
David Smith, Biology

University Property Update:

The University will be razing two older homes on currently owned property that is on the top of the hill overlooking the Laughlin Health Building. This will likely ensue during the Winter Break when campus is less populated, and will transition to greenspace.

Also, the University will be purchasing three properties directly on the lower side of Howell-McDowell Building – one is the privately owned gravel parking lot that is fenced off, and also the two older homes directly behind that parking lot and between our existing MSU parking lots on Second Street.

After several years of work, we have completed our process of selling off non-contiguous pieces of property that were deemed not of strategic use to the University.

Outgoing Regent:

Please take a moment to thank Mr. Craig Dennis for his service over the past three years as Staff Regent. Craig has been steady, good to work with, and did a nice job working with the Board of Regents.

University Branding and Color Patterns:

The University is making a few branding modifications as a result of work completed this past spring. The changes will begin to be phased in this summer and early fall.

MSU's new branding tagline will move away from "Major in You". Our use of Major in You has been scheduled to end this August as the usage rights expire. Through a number of presentations and input sessions this past spring, we will be phasing in a new tagline of "SOAR Higher". This line brings a strong connection to our Eagle theme and will provide creative marketing opportunities for a broader scope of students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and friends of the University.

MSU's blue and gold color patterns will remain intact as will our logo, but our new typeface of choice for publications will be Garet Extra Bold. These changes will be represented in future student recruiting materials, digital marketing and advertising, and as we create new materials. Our Office of Communications and Marketing will be sending more information soon.

Living and Learning Communities in Our Residential Halls:

Beginning this Fall we will be starting a 'Living and Learning Community' in Cartmell Hall. This hall, which typically houses first year students, is undergoing summer lobby renovations, obtaining a nice, new indoor/outdoor classroom on the lobby floor, and will become home to additional programming in conjunction with the Office of Housing. Randy Manis, Instructor of Communication, will be leading our pilot efforts in Cartmell for this initiative, and once established will be providing a template with which we can expand to other halls in the future. Randy will be teaching a class or two in the new Cartmell indoor/outdoor classroom, and a few other classes will be moved into the new classroom as we transition into this area. We are hopeful this supports our retention efforts and the use of our residence halls as a broader living and learning environment.

Post-Covid Transition Items:

If you have lingering covid signage in your areas on masking, etc., please take a moment to remove them as you see them.

Thanks to everyone for your efforts this summer, and as we get ready for the start of another academic year in August.

Jay Morgan
President