

## **MSU Faculty and Staff:**

We hope you are doing well. Now that we are working our way to the end of the semester I wanted to provide you with a few updates as our academic year progresses:

- Homecoming: By all measures Homecoming weekend seemed to be very successful. The weather was perfect, we won the ballgame, and all the receptions, dinners, breakfasts, and other alumni events had capacity crowds and there seemed to be smiles all around. Many of our faculty, staff, and students worked very hard to host a variety of events and should be complimented on the good job they did. Also, we had a number of donors here which yielded several new scholarship endowments.
- Campus Facility Transitions: As you know we have some significant construction, renovation, and location transition going on all across campus. All of these upgrades cause some hiccups occasionally, but in the end we will see a very improved campus. So that you have a full picture on where we are so far, the following “phases” can be used to conceptually walk you through the processes we are using, particularly as we attempt to get to early Fall 2018 when most all campus transitions and construction settles down. Our conclusive goal is to have a campus that is small, nice, has great facilities, has all of its units in synergistic locations, and is well maintained. During this process we will also most likely have a slightly smaller campus with respect to the number of buildings we can maintain over time.

### Phase I: October 2017 (Completed)

The “Rock” dining facility was opened near the residential living complex and now provides us with a very nice addition to the campus with expanded eating venues. The opening of this facility was one of the first items that had to be accomplished before a chain of other events below could take place. We hope you have been able to drop by and eat there.

### Phase II: November 2017-Early Spring 2018

Our next set of scheduled moves as we work toward aligning various offices and units is outlined below. Within this timeframe the following are planned:

- The Housing Office will move from Fields Hall to a more central location in the basement of Alumni Tower. This location will place the office and staff in the middle of our residential living area.
- The functions of the Center for Regional Engagement will be moved to corresponding areas on the main campus and the structure that it is housed in will be razed in order to clean up the area and save on utilities and maintenance, and then it will be converted to greenspace. Likewise, you may be aware that last spring a Blue Ribbon Committee concluded with a report that all of our regional functions should be examined for better efficiency and coordination among our various regional units. We are attempting to accomplish some of the suggestions of the Committee and are rolling many of our regional functions under one administrative unit. This will take some time to work through, but is consistent with the report that was produced last year. At present, we are planning to place the functions of regional outreach, our three regional campuses, regional services, regional/state grants, and a few other items operating in our 22 county region all under one administrative area lead by Dan Connell. This area will be renamed ‘Regional Education and Outreach’ and will report to the Provost and Vice President of

Academic Affairs, as most of the current units do presently. Dan is a long-time fixture within the region and this will allow him to help shape and focus our efforts in this area.

- The Office of Communications and Marketing, currently in a facility adjacent to campus, will move temporarily to the basement of Alumni Tower. In late summer of 2018 it will move to the Enrollment Services Office where Student Affairs is currently located. The facility that Communications and Marketing currently occupies will then be razed to save on utilities and deferred maintenance and subsequently converted to greenspace.
- We have several units ‘in waiting’ to transition to the newly expanded and renovated ADUC. Once ADUC is completed in early Fall 2018, the areas of Student Affairs, Student Life, Greek Life, and several other student-oriented units will move into the facility. Many of these staff and units are scattered across campus presently. This will bring about some closure and will have them together under one roof. The new facility will return to being an anchor for our campus and will serve as a central point for student engagement, student activities, as well as alumni and other cultural and community events.
- The Office of Alumni and Development, currently in a home adjacent to campus, will move temporarily next door to the Palmer House, and then eventually into the Enrollment Services Building and be housed with Communications and Marketing when Student Affairs transitions back to ADUC. This will place most all of our communications, marketing, alumni affairs, and development staff in one centralized building. The home that they are currently housed in will be razed and converted to greenspace to save money on utilities and deferred maintenance.
- The Honors Program, currently in a home adjacent to campus, will transition in the next month or two into Fields Hall on the main campus near Button Auditorium. Fields Hall already houses Honors students residential living, so locating the office in this building brings some degree of programmatic synergy between the office and the living area of our Honors students. Furthermore, it begins to brand Fields Hall as “honors central” and provides us with a place to call Honors home. The old Honors home will be razed and returned to greenspace to save on utilities and maintenance. Likewise, the move of Honors to the main campus will position it front and center, and also act as an anchor alongside the Craft Academy around academic excellence up and down our University Blvd.
- International Student Services, currently in a home adjacent to campus, will move as well and be placed within the current footprint of the campus within the student affairs area. We are working on some final plans in this area. The home will be razed to save on utilities and maintenance and then the property returned to greenspace.
- Career Services, currently in a home adjacent to campus, will also move into the main campus footprint and be placed in a central location for student accessibility. The structure the office currently occupies will also be razed and converted to greenspace. We are working on the final plans for the Career Center and should have it worked out soon.

### Phase III: May 2018-Early Fall 2018

You have most likely seen and ‘heard’ ADUC moving along, and it is shaping up to be a very nice addition to our campus. Upon completion of ADUC it will house a food court, the bookstore, the Eagle Card Office, Student Affairs, Student Life, Greek Life, and some of our recruitment and programming functions. The building will also have nice space for meetings, lounging, and studying. Since ADUC is such a large building on our campus, we are trying to accomplish Phase I and II above by early spring 2018. Completing Phase I and II will then free up our campus staff to spend the late spring and summer to devote their efforts towards getting ADUC ready and

opened somewhere around the fall semester. Once ADUC is completed, the construction areas around it will be cleaned up and turned into nice greenspace that will allow the area between ADUC, Button, Fields, the Library, Allie Young, and Howell-McDowell to return to its campus quad or park-like presence.

As you know, all of our progress comes with some moving and growing pains. Thank you to everyone for remaining patient as we work through the renovation, construction, and associated moves. Conclusively, our vision is that our campus will have all of its large projects completed and transitions solidified by early Fall 2018.

- Budget: Our budget this fiscal year continues to be stable. We have continued to be very restrictive on any new hires, particularly until we see where the pension and state budget discussion take us. Over the past few weeks we have been slowly and methodically trying to reposition areas, funds, and people to align with our new state performance funding formula, to see where our efficiency of operations are, and where our growth areas may be. Our goal has been to keep staffing tight, control our payroll and pension costs as much as possible, lower our fixed costs on facilities, and to try to build a small reserve in case we have a bump or two down the road with the state budget. We are also looking at our scholarship grid to see where we can leverage some funds for future enrollment as well. As a short snapshot, right now we know that our 'new' pension costs will rise due to state mandates around \$3.1 million additional dollars annually, and our estimates on the eventual loss of our Saudi students is roughly \$3.3 million per year. To date, despite efforts, we have not been able to reverse the decision last spring of the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission to close their relationship with us.

The number we do not know as of now is what 'hit' we may take in the next budget cycle from state appropriation reductions. This number could be in the double digits and will likely be cast on all Kentucky higher education institutions. Conclusively, we are continuing to try to position for these changes and move us closer to being ready should we have to modify quickly.

- Recruitment: We are beginning the early foundations of a recruitment push with around ten teams of individuals who will visit local school districts in an attempt to bolster relationships with students and ultimately enrollment. More on this as we move forward with them in this pilot form, and we will most likely add other schools to the list soon.
- State Pension Issues: We have been steadily watching the state pension issues that are at play, from a variety of angles. As the process in Frankfort unfolds we have also been having discussions with lawmakers and policymakers alike on things that are important to us in a potential pension bill, as well as the items that we would like to see amended within the proposed bill. We will continue to have those conversations and will keep you updated as we see any formalized changes. This is an important topic and issue for many of our faculty and staff individually, as well as from a University standpoint.
- Alumni Center: As you may know by now, we have spoken with our Board of Regents about discontinuing the quest to construct a new Alumni and Welcome Center on our campus. Rather, we have conceptualized switching our fundraising efforts to raising money for scholarships for students and enrollment growth. We plan to utilize some of the naming opportunities in a new ADUC to replace some of the naming opportunities that were in a proposed Alumni and Welcome Center. This move takes us away from continuing to raise money for new facilities and points our direction to raising money for student scholarships – which will assist in driving enrollment in the future.

- Organizational Changes:

As we continue to reposition for performance funding and a variety other measures, I wanted to let you know that the Division of Student Success will return to the Division of Student Affairs effective July 1, 2018. The student success personnel and other initiatives around student success have been moved to Academic Affairs, and thus the units remaining will comprise a very nice core area of Student Affairs. Within the next few weeks we will also be starting a search for a permanent Vice President for Student Affairs, which will likely be an internal search due to budgetary measures.

Also effective July 1, 2018, the KY Center for Traditional Music and the Folk Art Center will move out from under University Advancement and will then come under the administrative leadership of the Caudill College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Their physical location will remain the same. This move will help increase some synergy between these functions and the faculty and staff of the Caudill College.

- Strategic Planning Teams: Our comprehensive strategic planning teams have finished over half of their meetings with roughly 80 faculty, staff, and students from across all facets of campus engaged in the process. Each of the four respective teams are scheduled to conclude their discussions and recommendations on December 1, and will forward their recommendations to the Strategic Planning Leadership Team. Once we receive the recommendations we are planning to provide a campus-wide dissemination of them to a variety of constituency groups and forums in January – so more to come as the teams draw their discussions to a close.
- Student Success: I have been in several meetings all around campus and heard individuals and groups talking about recruitment, retention, student progression, and a variety of other student success-oriented topics. These are great to hear, and as our future hinges on these student success attributes and more, we need to continue those conversations and implement many of them across your units. This year our retention rate for Freshman to Sophomore status is about 70%+/. Let's see if we can drive that closer to 74+% next year. I hope that you will continue to discuss these in your units.

We appreciate what each of you do to make our University operate on a day-to-day basis. Likewise, most would acknowledge that between changes in funding formulas, pension uncertainty, and possible state budget issues that it can be easy to lose sight of why we are here. So, as we move through the academic year and encounter the good news and bad, let's keep student success as our main mission. We can continue to be a very nice small-to-mid-sized university that has a focus on student success.

Many thanks,

Jay Morgan  
President