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Message from the President

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Good afternoon,

I hope many of you were able to hear award-winning journalist Roland S. Martin when he was on campus earlier this month. If you heard him, you know it was a very thought-provoking evening. I thought his message was particularly relevant for our university as he spoke about understanding all the facts around an issue and making sure the full picture is evident before taking a stand. I thought it was a powerful addition to our inclusive excellence efforts this semester.

Dr. Marrero

By now you have all certainly heard that Dr. Kyle Marrero has been officially selected as Georgia Southern's 14th president. He and I have spoken frequently since his selection and I continue to be excited about his arrival on campus. He wants to keep everything centered on student success and the student experience, he is a superb fundraiser, he loves engaging with his communities (on-campus and off), and he has a wonderful history of spurring enrollment growth. He will begin April 1 and is already starting to make the job his own.

He asked me to pass along some leadership staffing changes that will take effect when he arrives.

Dr. Scot Lingrell will be joining Georgia Southern University effective April 1, 2019 as Vice President for Enrollment Management. Dr. Lingrell has been with the University of West Georgia since 2005 and has done an excellent job serving the students of that institution. During Scot's tenure, enrollment has grown considerably as has West Georgia's commitment to student success. As a result, the tremendous quality of services to their students has grown as well.

As Dr. Lingrell comes in, Dr. Amy Ballagh will continue to impact Georgia Southern's enrollment as she moves to Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management. Dr. Ballagh has been a tremendous asset for me, and for Georgia Southern, and I am certain she and Scot will make a great team. Please join me in welcoming Scot, and in thanking Amy for her leadership.

Also on April 1, Annalee Ashley will be accompanying Dr. Marrero to Georgia Southern University as his Chief of Staff and will lead the Office of External and Government Relations. As many of you know, Annalee was Georgia Southern's Director of State and Federal Relations before moving to the University of West Georgia as Director of Strategic Communications. We are excited that Annalee will be returning to her alma mater in this exciting new role.

Budgeting and operations

I understand there are questions about the Comprehensive Administrative Review (CAR), the budget redirection exercise and the salary studies.

We are working through all these questions now and should start having some more clarity on each of these issues within the next few weeks.

While each is a separate task, they are all connected. CAR and the redirection exercise are designed to find operational efficiencies at Georgia Southern. Through these processes, we should be able to provide quality education in the most cost-effective manner. We need to remain focused on our core mission -- serving students -- and identify efforts on campus that are duplicative or maybe even just not necessary. I expect there will be some corners of campus where we will have to significantly change how we think and operate. I fully believe that is appropriate and exactly what an emerging university should be doing.

We also will be investing more funds into providing salary adjustments for our employees. We will be receiving full reports on the faculty and staff studies later this month, and will immediately begin developing a multi-year plan to address what we can. Please know that the leadership on this campus

has employee salaries as one of the most important priorities for the next budget year.

Inclusive excellence

My thanks to those of you who participated in the “inclusive excellence” listening sessions that were held last week. The information gleaned from those sessions will be combined with feedback from our survey on these issues. Our consultant, Dr. Damon Williams will be back on campus [on Feb. 25 to start a conversation](#) about what he has heard and where we should go next as a university. We want to use these exercises to change the lens through which we see our university and I encourage you all to participate.

The Feb. 25 session will be very interactive and we want people to [sign up](#) to attend. During this session, we will also start to merge the effort with our ongoing strategic planning exercise.

Enrollment

Spring enrollment is settling at about 24,500, at least at 91% of fall enrollment for all campuses. Summer enrollment is still trending upward with an additional 199 students added this week. Spring 2019 new applications have slowed but they are still moving for the March Minimester. We are still trending ahead in freshman and dual enrollment apps and admits for spring, summer and fall 2019 as compared to this point in time in 2018. Transfer apps and admits are up for summer and fall 2019. Graduate apps and admits up for summer but down for fall.

Fortunately, our applications for fall are trending up, so we are encouraged about next academic year. We had 566 prospective juniors and seniors visit the Statesboro campus this past weekend and we have more Eagle Preview days scheduled in the months. Thank you for the invaluable role you play in these important events and with the recruiting, educating and retaining of our students. Your advocacy and promotion of Georgia Southern can make a big difference to your neighbors, friends, co-workers and associates!

Employee excellence

I was in Atlanta for much of this week and was disappointed that I had to miss the staff service awards ceremonies. Please know how thankful I am for the role all our employees have in making Georgia Southern such a special place to work and learn. I am confident in our future because of our faculty and staff. You have displayed your excellence and your ability to rise to every challenge and to move Georgia Southern forward to greater achievements.

Thank you all again for your dedication to this university, and for your service to our students and our communities.

Shelley C. Nickel

Interim President

Georgia Southern University