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### Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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# July Message from the President

July 15, 2019

**GS President** <president@georgiasouthern.edu>

Dear Colleagues,

Good morning! I hope everyone enjoyed their Independence Day holiday. Summer is quickly steaming along as we welcome our new students during SOAR sessions and prepare for fall classes to begin on Aug. 19. June was full of strategic planning, meetings, and activity that culminated with a trip to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., where I spent time sharing Georgia Southern's vision and strategic direction with our Senators, Congressmen, and key leadership of the U.S. Army. While in Washington, we hosted a reception for 150+ alumni and friends in the greater Washington area.

As you know, July 1 marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for Georgia Southern University. With that comes the implementation of our FY20 budget, which this year includes approximately \$11 million toward recurring faculty and staff equity and merit salary increases. Market equity adjustment letters have now all been received - we are investing approximately \$6.5 million in market equity adjustments, which will impact more than 1,200 faculty and staff.

This is just a first step, but it is a very significant step in an ongoing analysis and improvement of Georgia Southern's compensation philosophy and our investments in our people.

Believe it or not, it is time to plan for next year's budget (FY21). Starting next month, we will be introducing a new budget prioritization process that will invite involvement at all levels of our institution. As we develop -- and take part in -- the budget prioritization process, I believe we can increase engagement and transparency. Our goal is to clearly communicate how and why strategic budget decisions are made and the timeline for the budget process. You will hear more about this soon and the next steps in our CAR assessment processes.

I recently learned that summer involves a longstanding tradition where the President cuts a watermelon during an on-campus festival. I understand that this tradition began in 1948 when late President Zach Henderson wanted to provide a cool treat to the students, faculty and staff who were still on campus during the hot summer months. It was also a way to take advantage of local agricultural harvests and invite the local community onto campus.

As the university has evolved, we have decided to re-envision and expand this event. So, I would invite everyone to join me and my family for a *Summer Celebration* where we will serve fresh fruit AND Leopold's ice cream to our on-campus family and to our community friends and partners on each of our campuses.

*Summer Celebration* will take place at 10 a.m. on the following dates and campuses:

July 15: Armstrong campus

July 16: Liberty campus

July 17: Statesboro campus

I look forward to seeing everyone this week! Maybe we can provide a little respite from this heat.

One more note about July. I am very pleased that July 1, 2019 also marked the official merging of the Board of Directors

of the Armstrong Foundation of Georgia Southern University, Inc. and the Georgia Southern University Foundation, Inc. I am very appreciative that our donors and volunteers unanimously supported the consolidation of Foundation resources, which will streamline fundraising efforts while honoring the integrity of donor requests.

We are very close to finalizing our new strategic plan and the key performance indicators that will measure our future success. Each of the VPs and I by August 1 will have a “scorecard” that will be posted on MyGeorgiaSouthern aligning the institutional and divisional goals to the new Strategic Plan Pillars – Student Success; Teaching and Research; Inclusive Excellence; Operational Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability; and Community Engagement. Again, our goal is to provide clear communication and transparency to what we are seeking to accomplish and how it will be measured. We are also continuing to work with university and community partners to gather feedback and solidify fall commencement plans. We remain on track to announce those plans as we head into the fall semester.

As you can see – there is lots going on! I appreciate all you do to make Eagle Nation the best place for us all to learn, serve, lead and grow!

People...Purpose...Action! Growing ourselves to grow others!

Sincerely,

Kyle