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Message from the President

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Happy New Year and Start of the Spring Semester! – January 13, 2020

Happy New Year and welcome back to a new semester! I hope you all had a chance to rest and recharge, because while there is a lot to celebrate, there is also a lot to be done! (And for me, that includes getting back to the gym to lose my new holiday “expansion”!)

Looking at the strategic opportunities ahead of us in 2020, I want to share some highlights:

- In December, the Logistics Technology Leadership Council was charged, and Georgia Southern has taken a leadership role in being the educational partner in this effort, as we work together with area stakeholders (education entities, industry leaders, and SEDA) to establish this region and the state of Georgia as a global leader in logistics technology innovation through research, education, and technology transfer. In 2020, we will take strides toward achieving this goal with our partners as we work to create a business plan that will inform our path forward.
- In 2020, we will continue developing our regional education partnership network with area school systems and education stakeholders in both Chatham and Bulloch counties. In Chatham County, we will finalize a plan, in coordination with Savannah State and Savannah Tech, to fulfill the dual enrollment needs of the county. In Bulloch County, we will further implement early learning and Kindergarten-ready programs. As a reminder, the goal of these partnerships is to ensure that every student in this region has been given every opportunity—from birth to graduation—to become gainfully employed, enrolled in a local institution of higher learning, or enlisted in the military.
- I look forward to celebrating the completion of our new engineering research facility! The impressive structure, with state-of-the-art research labs, will be a spectacular addition to the Statesboro campus and will increase our capabilities for leading engineering innovation and serving the workforce needs of Southeast Georgia.
- We will continue developing our new hospitality management program within the Parker College of Business. A key piece of our regional academic plan, we plan to combine a highly sought-after curriculum with immersive management internships and coop opportunities in collaboration with regional partners and leaders in the hospitality industry.
- We will realize the full potential of our new learning center in Wexford, Ireland. When I visited in the fall, our excitement might have been overshadowed by the enthusiasm we saw from the leaders and community in Ireland. It’s clear our students will have an incredible experience with the people and our new facilities in Ireland.
- Our new potential partnership with Junior Achievement of Georgia has the opportunity to bring approximately 15,000-17,000 middle and high school students a year onto our Armstrong campus in Savannah in the coming years. Junior Achievement seeks to build a Discovery Center in Savannah, and we have identified the perfect spot in our rec center on the Armstrong campus as those operations move to a new location in the sports arena. These Discovery Centers are incredible hands-on learning environments for students and would give us an invaluable opportunity to engage Georgia Southern with the exact audiences we hope will become our future students. Stay tuned for more information as we move through the USG integrated review process and dialogue with Junior Achievement with the intent that this partnership will become a reality!
- This spring, I will need your help to educate our students about the importance of the 2020 Census. An accurate count of the residents in our communities ensures that we receive enough federal funding to support our population’s needs. It is important to know that the university will account for students who live on-campus. If students live off-campus, they need to respond to the online form and be counted as a resident of their off-campus location. College students should be counted where they live at the time of the census, not at their parent’s house! Please help me share this message to our students.
- In 2020, we will complete three searches for cabinet-level positions:
 - Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence (and our Chief Diversity Officer): Three finalists have been identified and are scheduled to visit campus later this month. Please be on the lookout for more details as I hope you will take part in this search process.
 - Athletic Director: We have formed a search committee, made up of a comprehensive group of campus and community stakeholders, and we have hired a search firm to help us identify highly qualified leaders from across the nation. We plan to have a new Athletic Director named mid-spring.
 - Vice President for Student Affairs: Critical to the first pillar in our strategic plan, student success, we plan to kick off this search in the next few weeks.

- As guided by pillar three of our strategic plan, we will continue progress toward our Inclusive Excellence goals. Faculty attended a workshop on Friday that focused on these important issues. Inclusive Excellence will also be the topic of discussion for our upcoming Leadership Development Institute on Feb. 14. Additionally, the President's Student Advisory Council (PSAC) has scheduled their next two "Courageous Conversations" for Feb. 17 and 18 on the topic of "Social Justice." On March 9 and 12, we will talk about "Gender and Sexuality."

Finally, I will point out that today is not only the first day of our spring classes, but also the first day of the Legislative session. Over the next few months, I will spend more time in Atlanta, helping to advocate for Georgia Southern and University System initiatives. I will be in Atlanta several days this week, in fact, to hear the Governor's State-of-the-State address and also to present our budget and requests for the upcoming fiscal year to University System of Georgia personnel. Remember, this is the next step in the process we started in August by asking each division to assess and document their budget prioritization and needs.

Thank you for staying tuned through the end of this long email – I told you we have a lot to look forward to in 2020!

Here's to a great spring semester!

Sincerely,

Kyle

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