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### Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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# Dear Colleagues,

Oct. 5, 2020

As I look back at the last eight weeks since the fall semester began, I am overwhelmed with pride and gratitude. For many of you, this year has been unlike any other, and you have dealt with personal challenges while tirelessly continuing to serve our students. I have witnessed that determined, roll-up-your-sleeves mentality in action, and I have never been more confident in our resilience as an institution and our ability to adapt and pivot to face what is to come.

Specifically, our **CARES Team** has done an outstanding job in supporting our efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus on our campuses. This week marks the fifth consecutive week of decline in positive cases within our university community. While these numbers indicate continued effectiveness with our plan to protect our campus classrooms, offices, and communities, the change in season brings a new contributing factor in spreading the virus, as well as other seasonal illnesses. We must remain vigilant with our adherence to public health guidelines.

As you remember, **preparation for fall semester** began in April, with the goal of returning to on-campus instruction with social distancing measures in place. As we plan for spring semester, we will continue to adhere to our promise to provide as much opportunity as possible for our students to engage in the classroom, while adhering to health and safety protocols.

Election season is in full swing, and **your vote counts!** Today, Oct. 5, is the last day to register so that you can exercise your right to vote in the Nov. 3 election. We have provided information on our [website](#) on registration and voting location information. Bulloch County residents are able to vote early on Georgia Southern's Statesboro campus from Oct. 20-22 in the Russell Union Ballroom. Early voting locations in proximity to the Armstrong and Liberty campuses can be found [here](#).

As you remember from previous communications and from the State of the University address in August, we realized a \$19.45 million recurring reduction in the **FY 2022 state budget allocation** in response to enrollment decline and state revenue losses from COVID-19. At this time, any restoration toward previous state funding levels due to COVID-19 is unknown. Additionally, due to enrollment and credit hour production decline from FY19 to FY20, Georgia Southern will face a recurring allocation reduction beginning FY 2022 of approximately \$2.29M. If you remember, we already held back \$1.5M in unallocated funds in anticipation of this reduction. Enrollment growth for fall semester 2020 and redirected savings from voluntary separation should offset the remaining \$800,000 of reduction and provide nominal investment funds.

Any realized new recurring revenue for FY 2022 will follow three basic priorities: the funding of new lines (or previously eliminated/frozen vacant lines) deemed critical to achieving our strategic goals; essential operational funds lost in recurring budget reductions deemed critical to the unit, department, or divisional success; and recurring funding of salary equity and/or merit salary increases (if appropriated by the state).

We will be taking the remainder of October and the first few weeks of November to finalize our budget narrative for FY 2022, which is due to the University System office in late November. Thank you for your engagement at each level of the institution throughout this process. Once completed, we will share the document and all budgetary prioritization decisions. I also want to thank the faculty and departments for helping add classes for the October minimester—we

have one more week until enrollment census is due (October 12). Every credit hour gained not only helps our students progress in their degree programs, but also helps our budget outlook.

I am excited to share with you that we are moving forward with our partnership with Junior Achievement of Georgia (JA) and with our plans to host a **Discovery Center** on the Armstrong campus. In addition to showing off our campus to upwards of 15,000 prospective college students each year, this partnership will offer abundant experiential learning and employment opportunities for our students. This is exactly the type of relationship that evidences the value added of a collaborative approach to educational attainment and talent development! Retrofitting construction of the former Student Recreation Center, funded by Junior Achievement, could begin as soon as next semester.

I hope you all have had a chance to visit the new Armstrong Recreation Center (ARC), which opened in August of this year and provides an additional 5,000 square feet of dedicated fitness space with a variety of new training equipment, two regulation wood courts, brand new locker rooms, and a new dedicated sound system in each fitness space. If you have not seen it, I encourage you to experience this outstanding new space for our students and patrons!

I would be remiss if I did not congratulate our Eagles for their win against ULM this weekend! This season has certainly gotten off to an exciting – and heart palpating – start!

Finally, I want to thank you all for what you do in service to our students. These are trying times for them as they navigate their studies, relationships, and life in an environment no one could have foreseen. We will and must continue to support ALL of their needs...instructional, physical, and emotional. To that end, I want to remind everyone of the counseling and support programs we have in place at Georgia Southern for our students. Please take a moment and click on this [link](#) to understand the breadth of our services and how you can best assist a student in need. Together – caring, helping, and engaging even in difficult times is what makes Georgia Southern an incredible institution and family.

Sincerely,  
Kyle

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*Growing ourselves to grow others*

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