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Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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Dear Colleagues,

Nov. 2, 2020

Welcome to **Homecoming week**: the Soaring 20s! The Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Alumni Relations, and many others have been hard at work to make this modified experience one to remember for our students, faculty and staff, community and alumni! I encourage you to [participate](#) in our virtual events and socially distant gatherings, which will culminate with us cheering on the Eagles to victory against Troy on Saturday. Thank you to our staff and our students who have worked tirelessly to plan a memorable week for us all!

On Friday, each of you received an email with initial information about the **Inclusive Excellence Climate Survey**, the implementation of which represents the last of seven recommendations from Damon Williams' Inclusive Excellence Report. Open to all students, faculty and staff, this survey is a university-wide assessment that will help inform critical areas of intervention by illuminating your views on the workplace and campus environment, equity, fairness, and partiality. Most importantly, it will help us focus on the greatest areas of improvement in alignment with our Inclusive Excellence Action Plan and programs. You will receive an email, today, Nov. 2, that includes a private link confidential and specific to you. I invite you to participate in this survey, which should take about 30 minutes and will be open through Nov. 20. Your engagement is key to our future success!

For those of you who will be voting on election day, Nov. 3, our [website](#) provides details on how you can do so. This week, and in the coming weeks, as we witness how the nation moves forward in the wake of the election results, please remember and remind your colleagues and our students about the resources that the Counseling Center and the Office of Inclusive Excellence provides. It is important for us, as a university community, to **model Inclusive Excellence in our words and our actions** and to honor and respect what makes each of us unique. This is a time for us to lead by example - to grow together and to unite in our shared vision of creating a campus climate that values our differences and encourages positive dialogue on subject matters of which we may or may not agree. We have stated these words in our Inclusive Excellence Statement and Action Plan - now let's live them together!

Our enrollment success this semester with 3.4% overall headcount growth and a record freshman class provides an opportunity for us to model and prioritize future strategic investments. As a reminder, we will be finalizing the **budget narrative for FY 2022** over the next few weeks that we will submit to the University System Office at the end of this month. This narrative will include our required reduction plan of \$2.29M, as well as provide a detailed plan of how we will utilize any new recurring revenue as a result of enrollment growth. Any realized 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). Your department leader should have already provided to you the budget priority submission for your area, which informed our decision making at each level of the planning process. Once the narrative is completed and submitted to the University System Office, we will share the document and all budgetary prioritization decisions. All FY 2022 budget decisions will be finalized in late spring following the legislative session and Governor's signature.

Our cross-divisional **commencement** planning team is hard at work to prepare for in-person graduation ceremonies for our students with [several protocols](#) in place to protect the health and safety of our attendees and our staff! To present five in-person ceremonies, they will need help from a number of volunteers. Please fill out the [volunteer form](#) by close of business today, Nov. 2. If you have any questions, please reach out to commencementstaff@georgiasouthern.edu.

Our Return to Campus Plan and our CARES Team efforts continue to work in mitigating the spread of **COVID-19** within our campus environments, but we must remain vigilant in exercising responsibility both on and off campus—to wear face-coverings, remain socially distant from others, and wash our hands frequently! As students begin [registration](#) for spring semester, they will see that we have adapted delivery modes to fit their desire to be more engaged in the classroom setting. In order to maintain appropriate safety measures for both our students and our faculty in the classroom, a range of course delivery options will be presented to students, including an increased number of face-to-face course offerings at expanded times throughout the week.

While there is much to celebrate at Georgia Southern, I would also like to acknowledge and give my appreciation to the hard work that each of you have put into making this semester successful. I recognize that this semester has been challenging and stressful for many of you, and that you have faced trials and have adapted and innovated in the face of one of the most difficult and uncertain times we have experienced as a nation in many years. There is nothing normal or certain in these times other than the continued implementation of our planning, continued assessment, active communication, and most importantly caring for each other. Please continue to utilize the resources that are available to you and remember that we must take care of our personal wellbeing before we can invest in and grow others. The University System of Georgia has partnered with KEPRO to provide employees and their family members with a **comprehensive Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. Full-time and part-time employees, family, and household members have access to the program, and services are free and confidential, within the bounds of the law. See https://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/2020_benefits/eap, contact KEPRO at 1-844-243-4440 or go to www.eaphelplink.com and use the company code USGcares.

I remain thankful, inspired and in awe of your continued efforts to go above and beyond each and every day for our students, and thank you for your continued support and efforts toward our shared vision of People. Purpose. Action: Growing Ourselves to Grow Others!

Sincerely,
Kyle

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"PEOPLE...PURPOSE...ACTION:
Growing ourselves to grow others

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