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Message from the President

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Dear Colleagues,

Feb. 10, 2021

We are now well into the second month of our spring semester! Certainly, we still face obstacles due to COVID-19 – its economic impact and the hardships on people and families – as well as the unrest that continues to challenge our country and our communities. At Georgia Southern, we have set a course to strive for excellence, to achieve Inclusive Excellence on our campuses and the communities we serve, to keep our campus communities safe, and in this journey, continue to grow individually and collectively, guided by our principles and our values. There is no doubt in my mind that we have been largely successful these past nine months and have grown in our appreciation of the collective intellect and impact of our work together. In this, we must never forget our mission – to educate and serve our students!

Speaking of students and our mission to educate, we are excited to announce several significant philanthropic contributions that will support our students and further elevate our nationally recognized academic programs. This week, the Board of Regents approved the naming of the department of music to become the Fred and Dinah Gretsches School of Music with a \$3M gift commitment plus the Gretsches Collection of historic drums, guitars, and company archives! Downtown Savannah has already been identified as an exhibit venue for the Gretsches Collection, as Georgia Southern is establishing the Fred and Dinah Gretsches School of Music Performance Stage at the Atlantic Building of the new downtown Plant Riverside District.

In the last few weeks, we also received the second-largest estate gift to date by the Georgia Southern University Foundation – a \$1.48M gift from the Castle family to provide scholarship support for our College of Education students! These types of gifts are transformational - impacting students, programs, and our communities for generations to come.

Also this week, the Board of Regents approved the naming of our planned convocation center, the Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center. Together, Ruth Ann (a triple Eagle) and Senator Jack Hill ('66 alum) left an indelible mark on Georgia Southern, southeast Georgia and the state. This building will be a tremendous addition to our Statesboro campus, for our community, and for our students. We are grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for supporting this project, which will be an important reminder of the generational impact made by Jack and Ruth Ann Hill.

My thanks also to all of you who contributed to our annual For the Love of Blue campaign, which wraps up on Feb. 14. It sends a powerful message to our external donors when they see the level of support exhibited by our faculty and staff – those who are closest to the students we impact every day.

Recently, you received an email from me and from your divisional leaders announcing the administration of an Employee Engagement survey. The purpose of the survey is to gain input from all employees about their work environment, what is working well and where there may be opportunities for improvement. I know the timing (March 1 - 15) is not ideal, in that viewpoints may or may not be conflated due to the challenges mentioned earlier...but, I believe our future path of improvement must include your input and engagement...and there is not a better time to start than now! Your participation will be important to help all of us create an engaging work environment that supports growing ourselves as highlighted in our strategic plan.

As we work through this month and for the remainder of the semester, I challenge us to model civil discourse and a shared commitment to continuous improvement and caring for each other. Guided by our values and our mission, we will propel our institution to the future beyond COVID-19. That future is indeed bright for Eagle Nation!

Sincerely,
Kyle

People. Purpose. Action: Growing Ourselves to Grow Others!

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

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