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Message from the President

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Dear Colleagues,

April 1, 2021

As I start this message to you on this first day of April, with spring blooming, I am celebrating two years as President of Georgia Southern University. Since my first official day on April 1, 2019, we have experienced many challenges and successes. What I've come to know and understand is that we grow most when we are faced with adversity and challenges, and this is evidenced by what we have experienced the last two years. Together, we have persevered, adapted, innovated, improved and grown. We have depended on one another with a "can-do" attitude and an emerging sense of positivity and trust in a future full of hope. I am so grateful and thankful to have been granted this opportunity to be the President of Georgia Southern University during this important time in our history. Thank you!

As we reflect upon exactly one year ago - toggling over to fully online instruction for the remainder of spring 2020 - I want to acknowledge not only the incredible effort of our faculty to reimagine how we deliver more than 5,000 courses fully online, but to also herald our staff, many of whom, as designated essential personnel, came to campus every day during this time – ensuring technology, admissions, financial aid, HR, payroll, facilities, grounds, custodial and health and safety continued to function at the highest level. Thank you!

Now, a year later, we emerge into spring 2021 with much to celebrate! The General Assembly closed out the 2021 legislative session yesterday, and we are thrilled to report that the Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center was fully funded in the budget as passed by the Legislature. I want to give a special thanks to Majority Leader Jon Burns for his leadership and support and to the Georgia Southern legislative delegation for their efforts in seeing this project to fruition. The FY22 state budget also includes formula growth funding for the USG. Over the next few weeks, bills that have passed the Legislature will be sent to the Governor's desk for signing consideration, including a bill to expand the Logistics Innovation Corridor map to encompass a six-county region inclusive of all of our campus locations. Also heading to the Governor's desk is a bill to extend our ability to carryforward 3% of our tuition revenue as well as a bill that will grant all state employees the ability to take up to three weeks of paid parental leave.

Upon final approval of the budget, the Board of Regents will provide our specific institutional budget information and, as we always do, we will provide transparent budget reporting to all campus constituents. We are grateful for the continued support of the Governor, our local delegation, and the Board of Regents. Thank you!

It is also time for us to show our gratitude and thanks to our outstanding faculty, staff and teams during our upcoming University Awards of Excellence. Award recipients will be announced Friday at 10:00 a.m. via email to all faculty and staff with a link to read more

about each of our outstanding recipients and a congratulatory message from me! This year, we had 147 individual nominations and 10 team nominations. We will award 21 individual and 1 team award aligned with our institutional values and pillars of our university strategic plan. In addition, we will honor 408 faculty and staff for years of service ranging from 5 to 30 years – over 4,000 years of service in total. Wow, and thank you!

Over the next several weeks, we will continue our journey of growth and improvement by sharing the results of both our institutional Climate Survey and our Employee Engagement Survey. The Climate Survey institutional results will be presented by Dr. TaJuan Wilson on Wednesday, April 7, at 1:00 p.m., and the Employee Engagement Survey results will be presented to campus on Monday, April 12, at 10:00 a.m. Look for more information through email and the Midweek Memo. Both presentations will be recorded and posted, and immediately following the campus presentation, divisional and unit reports will be provided as we begin our roll out and action plan development. I want to thank our faculty and staff for their participation in these voluntary surveys – reaching over 77% participation for the Employee Engagement Survey. That's an amazing participation rate and will provide us with comprehensive data and information to grow ourselves to grow others. Thank you!

Finally, I am proud to be part of an institution that is able to provide COVID-19 vaccines on both its Statesboro and Armstrong campuses. We have already provided approximately 2,000 vaccinations through our closed pod vaccination sites, and now that the Governor has opened up eligibility to the general population, we will come close to doubling that number this week. Additionally, we are exploring ways to continue partnering with our communities to expand vaccine availability. A few open appointments remain for our drive-through vaccine clinic on Friday in Statesboro. If you wish to sign up, register through your my.georgiasouthern account as soon as possible. As more vaccine appointment slots become available, we will continue to notify you through email.

Spring is in the air and with that a sense of hope and positivity as we navigate our future together. I invite you to take a moment and think of all that you are grateful for – family, friends, and being part of an institution that transforms lives and serves communities.

Sincerely,
Kyle

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Growing ourselves to grow others

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