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Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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It's April!

April 3, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

April is upon us as we race to the last weeks of the spring semester, finals, and commencement ceremonies. April 1 signaled the fourth full year and beginning of my 5th year as president of Georgia Southern. I am continually grateful for you—the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community that represent Eagle Nation and the region we serve. In spite of challenges, together, we have achieved so much: record fundraising, record research awards/expenditures, and record graduation rates in the history of the institution. We have conferred more degrees in the last three years than any other three-year period in the history of our institution.

Our future is incredibly bright as Georgia Southern is at the epicenter of generational growth in southeast Georgia. Our goal must always be to transform lives through educational attainment and to impact regional economic and talent development with market-aligned programs that produce critical-thinking, problem-solving, career-ready graduates. This is what Georgia Southern does every day with dedicated, quality faculty and staff who truly care about the success of every student.

Over the next several weeks, we will continue our journey of growth and continuous improvement by sharing the results of our third annual Employee Engagement Survey. The Employee Engagement Survey results will be presented to campus today, April 3, at 3 p.m. In case you miss the live virtual town hall, the presentation will be recorded and [posted online](#). In the next week, divisional and unit-level reports will be provided as we begin our roll out, and action plan updates and development. In addition, the comments will be posted in the MyGS Portal. I want to thank our faculty and staff for their engagement in this voluntary survey as we reached a participation rate of more than 61%.

The Georgia General Assembly completed the 2022 legislative session last week. We are grateful to report that the cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) salary increase of \$2,000 was passed and will be effective July 1, 2023 for all eligible faculty and staff. In addition, the legislators approved full funding for HOPE Scholarships (100% of tuition) for next academic year. The most exciting news for Georgia Southern came in the way of two capital funding projects: \$1.69 million in bonds to fund renovations on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah for a new medical campus partnership with the Medical College of Georgia, AND \$6 million in bonds for a new dental school facility on the Statesboro Campus. As we garner additional information on these exciting opportunities, we also will be receiving further direction from the USG on the implementation of the \$66 million decrease in state funding to the USG (equaling approximately \$3.9 million for Georgia Southern). As I stated in my email to campus last week, we will focus our reduction strategies on mitigating impact to students and programs while continuing to serve the economic and talent development needs of a growing region.

Over the next few weeks, the Board of Regents will provide our specific institutional budget information and, as always, we will provide transparent budget reporting to all campus constituents. We continue to be grateful for the support of the Governor, our local delegation, and the Board of Regents.

It is also time for us to show our appreciation to our outstanding faculty, staff and teams at our upcoming University Awards of Excellence Ceremony. The ceremony will be in person April 28, at 10 a.m., this year at the Statesboro Campus. We had more than 143 individual nominations and multiple team nominations. We will announce 17 individual awards and one team award aligned with our institutional values and pillars of our university strategic plan. In addition, we will honor more than 400 faculty and staff for years of service ranging from 5 to 40 years – more than 4,000 years of service in totality. Thank you for your service and dedication to Georgia Southern University!

Finally, this week in Georgia is the exciting annual tradition of the Masters golf tournament. This year's tournament is even more special as we will be cheering on Ben Carr, one of our very own GS men's golf team members. As runner-up in the US Amateur, he will be one of seven amateur golfers teeing it up in Augusta this Thursday. Ben, all of Eagle Nation is proud of you and will be cheering for you!

Sincerely,

Kyle

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