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University Update - July 2019

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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July 3, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

And suddenly it is July! There is still a lot going on around campus, including maintenance projects, summer theater, the national WELD conference, alumni events in Columbus and Dayton, and celebrations of recent retirements (including Bob Gatti, Laurie Draper, and Roger Routson). These retirements, and the years of service and dedication they represent, were especially moving to me. Other updates include:

Event Services

I am pleased to announce Matthew D'Oyly has been named Director of Events and Conferences effective July 1, 2019. Matthew and others spent the last few months gathering information and meeting with colleagues across campus, and there was broad support for a "one-stop-shop" to coordinate events and drive additional revenue. Please note that this is not a new position, but a reclassification of Matthew's current role. Matthew will report to Kristi Robbins. The Office of Events and Conferences will be primarily responsible for bringing new groups to campus, but will also coordinate signature University events through collaboration with cross-functional teams he will be identifying in the coming weeks. There is much work to be done to create a more centralized approach to event and rental management and I am glad that Matthew has agreed to take it on.

Strategic Planning

My thanks to leaders from Student, Staff, and Faculty Assemblies and the Cabinet who came together in June to launch our new strategic planning process. Together, we have further developed a process that will allow for ideas to come from anyone on campus. We also reviewed strengths and weaknesses from each area of campus and developed draft goals. All of this will be shared in August for further feedback and refinement.

All the participants noted that the planning process will move quickly this year. We need to approach the structure, goals, RFP process, and select initiatives for the 20/21 year. We will use multiple ways to communicate and request feedback (town halls, assembly meetings, e-mail, etc.), but know that if you have questions, comments, or concerns you can always contact me.

Custodial Contract

After a comprehensive bid process, we will be changing custodial contractors to Aetna Building Services. We were impressed by their proscribed approach to each of our facilities, meaning that all services (floor waxing, carpet cleaning, etc.) will happen on a regular and published schedule. Many of us have gotten to know the wonderful staff that have been with ABM and they are all being interviewed by Aetna. I'm also pleased that this new agreement will maintain the cleaning staff's starting wage, which was recently increased significantly.

Enrollment/Budget

We have 654 active undergraduate confirmations, up 40 from last year. We have 54 active transfer confirmations, up 15 from last year. Adults are at 33 (down 11) and new grad students stand at 38 (down 2), though it is still early for these groups. Continuing undergrads are at 1,678 (even with last year) and continuing grads are 129 (down 35, but most have not registered yet).

Those numbers are encouraging, but there is a flip side. Our tuition discount rate will be higher than anticipated. An error in our aid awarding algorithm meant that some students were given more aid than we had planned. This will increase the first year discount rate by about 6% and the overall discount rate by about 2%.

Our teams in Enrollment Management and the Business Office are working to reconcile these numbers into an updated budget picture. This is complicated before census day in September, but I would like to be proactive if we need to make changes in our budget. I have already asked each area for a 1% cut-back in anticipation of the need for savings and to plan for scenarios beyond that. Our plans continue to anticipate the second year of salary adjustments under the compensation plan.

I share this admittedly incomplete information out of a sense of transparency, not alarmism. We will work together once we better understand where we stand.

I'm also thankful to those (especially in Advancement and the Business Office) who worked so hard to ensure our Fiscal 2019 year ended strongly. We expect to have done better than the budget, as we will share once numbers solidify.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer! Our campus will be full of students again soon!

Sincerely,



John Comerford, Ph.D.
President