

Dear Colleagues and Students,

I wish to convey how honored, yet humbled, I am at being selected as Provost. I am grateful for the expressions of support and look forward to serving you and all of the University of Kentucky. I also greatly appreciate the opportunity to work closely with President Capilouto and his leadership team to continue implementing the vision he and the Board of Trustees have set forth for the University.

Over the holidays, I spent time learning as much as I could about ongoing initiatives and thinking about priorities, both short- and long-term. Since the beginning of the semester, I have continued to spend time listening, learning, and prioritizing with the academic deans, faculty, and staff from across campus. I am convinced that this campus possesses the richness of thought on how best to move forward and fulfill our mission. To that end, I am planning visits to each college to learn about priorities and challenges in each. I will also be reaching out to Provost-area units and those units with which our collective work intersects.

I also know that to achieve all that we want, we must be aware of what is happening throughout higher education. During my first week as Provost, I had the opportunity to spend a couple of days at a roundtable meeting for provosts at research institutions, which could not have occurred at a better time. We discussed mutual challenges in higher education and shared best practices on academic program development and diversity and inclusion.

In the near term, one issue on which I will be particularly focused, along with other members of the UK leadership team, is the Governor's proposed budget bill that has come out of the current legislative session in Frankfort. As the President has communicated to you, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Eric Monday and I, alongside the Deans, University Senate, Staff Senate, and our collective leadership teams, will be working on long-term financial sustainability through opportunities for program growth and operating effectiveness. Also in the immediate term, I will be analyzing the draft report from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Graduate Education and meeting with the leaders of that group to plan next steps.

I see this first message as the beginning of regular outreach to all faculty, staff, and students. Once I develop systematic plans for consistent communication, I will keep you informed. I greatly appreciate all that you do for the University of Kentucky. I wish you a very successful spring semester and a healthy, happy, and prosperous 2018.

Regards,

David W. Blackwell  
Provost