

Tuesday, April 1, 2014

This email is being sent on behalf of President Michael Benson.

Dear EKU Community:

It is, indeed, a great time to be on campus and I wanted to share some good news with you which will positively impact all of us associated with Eastern Kentucky University.

Through the hard work of our entire University team, more than a year of planning and preparation – and over 18 consecutive hours of negotiations – the House and Senate leaders agreed upon the 2014-2016 budget at 5:30 a.m. this past Sunday morning. The \$20.3 billion budget has now been sent to the Governor for approval.

This budget will feature some key funding resources needed to help move our institution forward in the years and decades to come. While all institutions in Kentucky will have a 1.5% cut in operating funds in the first year of the budget, we will benefit from the following allocations and approvals from the General Assembly:

- \$66.3 million for completion of Phase II of our Science Building
- \$2 million for capital investments into our aviation program
- \$136 million in operating funds
- \$75 million approval for a potential P3 (Public-Private-Partnership) for University Housing
- \$15 million for agency bonds to expand and renovate our athletics facilities

The 100% funding of our Science Building represents a generational opportunity that will expand our STEM+H capacity and complete a comprehensive state-of-the-art science building that will prepare this generation and others for years to come. It is impossible to overstate how significant this investment is to our Science programs and I look forward to breaking ground with the entire EKU community on Phase II this summer.

Accomplishing all of these key initiatives would not have been possible without each of you and your commitment to our mission as an institution. For those who engaged in helping to shape and share the message about how much these projects and funding mean to EKU, I extend a very special thank you.

David McFaddin and I met with legislative leaders in Frankfort yesterday to thank them for their support and it was noted that the EKU Board of Regents played a key role in helping push our agenda forward throughout the session. Our local representatives, Rita Smart and Jared Carpenter, were key in advocating for us at vital moments.

As noted above, this 2014-2016 budget will now be sent to the Governor for review and the final approval will occur on April 15th. I look forward to working with the entire EKU team to utilize these resources to execute our strategic goals in the very near future.

It takes all of us here at EKU to accomplish so many goals in such a short period of time. We had an aggressive plan and executed it with passion and an unyielding message of opportunity and excellence.

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I am honored to be an ECU Colonel and to work with such committed and capable colleagues on behalf of a remarkable institution that means so much to so many. Thanks again for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Benson