

TO: The Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate

FROM: Senator Michael T. Benson

DATE: September 7, 2018

RE: September Campus Report

We talk often about how, given the opportunity, that ECU students can compete favorably on the national stage, even in academic competitions against students from bigger-name schools.

The same is true for our faculty. As if we needed any further proof, consider Dr. Margaret Ndinguri of our chemistry department, and Dr. Lindsay Calderon, from biological sciences, who have teamed up to earn a U.S. patent, with 15 claims approved, for their discovery of a chemical compound that better targets specific types of reproductive cancer tumors. They are truly on the leading edge of science to improve treatments for specific cancers by providing a personalized therapy.

As our new Science Building was being planned, faculty collaborations such as this were often cited as a likely by-product. And now we're seeing that prediction come true. Congratulations to these two outstanding faculty members, and best wishes as they continue to push their research through additional channels in hopes that someday the treatment of cancer patients will be more bearable and effective.

This is the second patent in a short period of time for ECU faculty, and I have no doubt we'll see more in the years to come.

Just as our undergraduate students have been involved in that important project, other undergrads are involved with faculty members Dr. Stephen Richter, from biological sciences, and Dr. Michael Bradley, from the Department of Recreation and Park Administration, in some interesting work in the Red River Gorge, where they are tracking the behavior of copperhead snakes in an effort to minimize human-snake interactions in the popular recreation area.

Dr. Angela Aaron, staff psychologist and training coordinator in our Counseling Center and a two-time ECU alum, is the 2018 recipient of the Counseling Center Outstanding Early Career Psychologist Award presented by the American Psychological Association. Dr. Deborah Givens, chair of our Department of Communication, was elected vice president of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors. And Dr. Clint Pinion, of our Environmental Health Science

faculty, has been named president of the Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs.

Elsewhere, our undergraduates are gaining valuable career-related experience by virtue of partnerships that various academic programs have established throughout the area. For example, a new general aviation facility at Blue Grass Airport opened this summer and is already giving our professional flight and aerospace management students a head start on their careers.

One student who may be even better known as our 2017 Miss ECU recently distinguished herself in a national student entrepreneurship competition. Rose Pidgorodetska was one of only 21 finalists in a pitch competition this summer in Detroit. She gave credit to several ECU business faculty members who helped her perfect her pitch, as well as to the Kentucky Innovation Network office on our campus.

I hope you'll take time to catch as many of this year's Chautauqua lectures as possible. Dr. Erik Liddell has lined up another impressive set of speakers, related this year to the theme "Truths and Consequences." One, for a special Homecoming Week event, is our own professor and award-winning author, Dr. David Zurick, who'll talk about his latest book, "A Fantastic State of Ruin: The Painted Towns of Rajasthan." Before that, on Sept. 27, well-known Chicano activist Bobby Verdugo (for whom a center on campus is named) and Yoli Rios will reflect on the L.A. school walkouts of 50 years ago.

Less than 7 percent of the world's business programs can claim accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, and ECU is one of them. The five-year re-accreditation covers the School's baccalaureate degree programs in all majors, as well as its revamped MBA program.

Our Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program also met the high standards for continuing accreditation by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. The program, which is available in online and on-campus formats, is accredited through 2025. Several faculty and staff members have recently won significant awards or have been elected by their peers to serve in important positions.

We're approaching the college ranking "silly season" (the same might be said for elections as well), but there is one ranking that is fairly unique that ECU has managed to make for its 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive year: *Forbes* Magazine's Top Colleges in America. Considering that there are over 3,000 four-year degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States and this ranking is limited to the top 650, ECU is in good company.

Lastly, as many of you know, our Model Laboratory School underwent quite a facelift this past summer, with fresh paint, improved lighting, new safety features, and much more. As Superintendent John Williamson has noted, together with some programmatic changes, this will help the school in its ongoing quest to be a leader in successful teaching and learning practices.