

TO: The Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate  
FROM: Senator Michael T. Benson  
DATE: February 1, 2018  
RE: February Campus Report

Welcome back to a new semester and new calendar year.

Even in the midst of budgetary uncertainty, I am encouraged by two recent professional development events that will go a long way toward building our leadership capacity and ensuring a bright future for Eastern.

One was our second annual Faculty Leadership Institute, which attracted 17 participants for a series of sessions Jan. 8-9. As Dean Sara Zeigler said, it has never been more important that faculty be “passionate advocates for a meaningful, rigorous and strong academic foundation” for our citizens.

In the same vein just last week, Eastern held its inaugural DEEP Week. Of course, DEEP is the acronym for Developing Excellence in Eastern’s Professors, an event that originated with our Faculty Innovation Workgroup. Whether we’re talking about new fiscal realities or the latest pedagogical research, we are blessed to have such talented and engaged faculty leading the way.

Our faculty and staff also continue to shine in the area of community service. I was honored to be on hand on Jan. 24 when Dr. Qian Xiao, from our Department of Management, Marketing and International Business, and Matt Schumacher, senior director for student success in the Office of Retention and Graduation, each received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award. Congratulations to both of these outstanding ambassadors for the University.

If it seems that we have either a groundbreaking or ribbon-cutting about every month that is about right. Just before the break in December, we broke ground for a new student recreation center. Immediately after the break, I drove the car that broke the ribbon on our new parking garage. And, on Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 4 p.m., we’ll break the ribbon on a facility that many of you have already enjoyed – our new Case Dining Hall. Also, with the opening of Case Dining Hall, renovations are underway in the Powell Building. The ground floor of the renovated Powell is slated to be completed around the start of fall semester ‘18.

After a six-year absence, Eastern was excited to once again host the Kentucky All “A” Classic Basketball Tournament Jan. 24-28. Attendance exceeded expectations, approaching nearly 40,000. Many of that number, of course, were prospective students and their parents. The tournament offered a great opportunity to showcase our programs and facilities, and, undoubtedly, anyone who hadn’t been on our campus since we last hosted the All “A” Classic in 2011 was astonished to see the transformation. I know it causes us some traffic and parking inconveniences for a few days, but I am confident that the tournament helps our recruiting efforts, especially at a time when we have so much new to offer. What is not new, however, is

our hospitality, and I want to thank all those who helped us roll out the maroon carpet by leading tour groups, welcoming our visitors or assisting in any way.

We continue to work hard to advocate for ECU in Frankfort and will be holding our annual "Colonels at the Capitol" on Tuesday, February 6, 2018. Last Thursday, I presented before the House Budget Review Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. The link to the presentation can be found on our ECU website here:

<http://president.ecu.edu/insideloop/presentation-kentucky-state-budget-subcommittee-february-1-2018>

I am heartened by those who have decided to get even more involved in the political process by lobbying in person, writing or calling our elected officials, or even running for office.

Thanks for your continued service.