

TO: The Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate  
FROM: Senator Michael T. Benson  
DATE: September 7, 2017  
RE: September Campus Report

If there has been a common thread in the campus news since my last report, it is this: whether it is our students, our faculty, our academic programs or our facilities, Eastern continues to shine on the state and national stage.

First and foremost, in one of the world's worst-kept secrets, Faculty Senate Chair and psychology professor Dr. Matt Winslow will receive the Acorn Award on September 12th, the highest honor for teaching excellence bestowed by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Only one recipient from all of Kentucky's four-year public institutions is selected. The last ECU faculty recipient to be honored with this award was in 2008. Kudos to Professor Winslow!

In a few weeks, Dr. Cynthia Harter, assistant professor of economics and director of our Center for Economic Education, will receive the prestigious Henry H. Villard Research Award, presented by the National Association of Economic Educators and the Council for Economic Education.

Earlier this summer, Dr. Eric Parker, executive director of Model Laboratory School, was one of only 15 educators nationwide chosen to participate in the 2017 Global Education Policy Fellowship Program.

The accolades hardly stop with these noteworthy faculty honors. For example:

- Our Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology Program recently earned national accreditation from the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology through September 2021. ECU offers one of only two ABET-accredited Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology degrees in the world, and the only accredited program that is offered online.
- Recently, ECU became an approved site for the only play therapy center in about a 10-state area. Dr. Teri Nowak and Dr. Charlie Myers, who teach in our Department of Psychology and Department of Counseling, respectively, are co-directors of the Academy of Play Therapy and Expressive Arts. Target audiences include students who would like to obtain the play therapy credential, students who would like to conduct research in the area of play therapy, and potential clients in this region.
- ECU is the only regional university in Kentucky to receive the 2017 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from Insight into Diversity magazine. The HEED Award recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will be

featured along with 79 other national recipients in the November 2017 issue of Insight into Diversity magazine.

- Eastern ranks second among all public universities in Kentucky in Washington Monthly's annual "Best Bang for the Buck" rankings, scoring highest in the category of earnings performance. Only Murray State University ranked higher overall in the survey, which the magazine calls its "exclusive list of schools that help non-wealthy students attain marketable degrees at affordable prices." The rankings compare graduation rate, Pell performance, first-generation performance, earnings performance, net price of attendance for families with an income of below \$75,000 and predicted repayment rate.
- As I mentioned at convocation, the University is coming off another record year for private support. We recently concluded Fiscal Year 2017 with \$9.2 million in gifts and commitments, our second consecutive year with an all-time high. Included in that total are record annual amounts for scholarships. In fact, the largest single commitment this past year was \$1.25 million from an anonymous donor for scholarships in science and mathematics. In all, the ECU Foundation funded 1,151 scholarships this past year.
- It was also another stellar year for volunteer service. ECU students, faculty and staff contributed more than 22,650 hours of volunteer service in 2016-17, with 170 individuals earning the President's Volunteer Service Award.
- On the student side, as if he hadn't snagged enough headlines this past year, our Mitchell Scholar and recent graduate Tyler Swafford is one of only 57 students nationally to receive the Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship, which includes a \$5,000 stipend for graduate or professional study.
- Later this month, we will unveil a statue in honor of former football Coach Roy Kidd. The ceremony will begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 23. The Colonels will host Tennessee Tech at 6 p.m.
- As I mentioned at our Fall convocation, the All "A" Classic is returning to ECU for at least the next three years. The annual small-school basketball tournament will boost the local economy and bring more prospective students onto our campus and will take place January 24-28, 2018.

Of course, much has changed since we last hosted the All "A" tournament in 2011, and much more will change in the next few years.

One of those changes, of course, is the completion of Phase 2 of our Science Building. And that facility, now the largest of its type on a college campus in Kentucky, will take the spotlight these next few days during a celebration of Science and Mathematics Week. A dedication ceremony is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 15, at 10:30 a.m. in the Science Building atrium.

Also, 2006 ECU physics graduate Dr. Tracie Prater – whom some of you might remember – will serve as alumni speaker for the week. Dr. Prater, now an aerospace engineer with NASA, will speak tonight at 7:30 p.m. in Room 3104 of the Science Building.

Then, on Thursday, Sept. 14, National Medal of Science recipient Dr. Sylvester James Gates, the first African-American physicist elected to the National Academy of Sciences, will address “Does Diversity Matter in Science?” when he speaks at 7:30 p.m. in O’Donnell Hall of the Whitlock Building.

Also, students from all the high schools in Madison County will be visiting the Science Building daily through Thursday for hands-on science and mathematics activities and campus tours. What a wonderful opportunity to showcase all Eastern has to offer.

I hope the semester is off to a great start for each of you and I thank you for your continued service to ECU and our students.