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February 28, 2018 - From the President's Desk

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Dear Campus Community,

I know we are still deep in Ohio's winter season, but I cannot help but long for spring to come. As you may know, one hobby I hold most dear is gardening, and I just can't wait to spend more time in my new yard this year!

As an avid gardener, I also can't help but think of leadership when I'm gardening, which some of you may find curious. Gardening, like leadership, involves a lot of preparation and planning, then planting, and nurturing. A gardener builds a structure; prepares a bed; fills it with starter plants; and nurtures them along with water, nutrients, and sunshine.

Though it is apt, I know not everyone is comfortable with this analogy since gardening of course also involves pruning, and that can be challenging. Determining where and when to trim back is difficult. But when properly done, pruning reshapes plants and organizations alike while also stimulating growth—especially when they have strong roots.

Given proper care and attention, plants will often also surprise you. The same can be said for strategic planning, which is very much an organic process. We can thoroughly prepare and put structures in place to support our efforts, but it really is up to the participants—our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners—to determine the shape of our conversations and the direction of our strategy.

Our strategic planning process is well underway, with open and constructive discussions about Wright State University's future taking place at both the Dayton and Lake campuses, in the community, and virtually.

I am excited about the community dialogues we have had during the planning process so far. I believe that these campus conversations are where considerable growth can take place. Through the strategic planning process, we are planting the seeds for a renewed social infrastructure that encourages continuous dialogue among our community members.

An effective strategic planning process is dynamic, and allows for continuous improvement and adaptation. With it we will put into place a framework that helps faculty, staff, and leaders organize their work and adapt to the changing landscape of higher education.

When done well, strategic planning also stimulates discussion and organization across the university. It helps us refine our mission, vision and values. It puts us on a path to harnessing our collective pride in our work and each other, transforming our students and communities, and realizing our potential. By growing a renewed sense of

connection among us all, we will nurture the strategies this plan is built upon as we would with seeds and starts in the soil.

It is with my fullest heartfelt appreciation that I thank everyone who has participated in our process so far. The thoughts and feelings and hopes you have shared have been priceless. It is in these moments and others where I have realized how much we can still grow at Wright State. How great our potential is. I am impressed by how deeply you have already engaged in this process—something that I believe, through our collective effort, will take us to the next level.

Warmest regards,

Cheryl B. Schrader, Ph.D.

President

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