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March 24, 2017: Weekly Message from Interim President Curtis McCray

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March 24, 2017: Weekly message from Interim President Curtis McCray

Dear Campus Community,

I write to you one week of being on the job. That is very little time compared to, in many cases, your years of service to Wright State University. But I do bring a long resume of university work. That's one reason why the Board of Trustees has brought me here to help. I have no history to protect, no future to lose. But you have a lot at stake so I need your input. I want to emphasize, therefore, that I am the "interim president" only and that I will leave you and your campus no later than June 30, when the next day your new permanent president, Dr. Cheryl B. Schrader, will be in office; and I know from personal experience she will be eager to carry the university to a brighter future.

In the meantime, we have much work to do to prepare for the next fiscal year of the university, also beginning July 1, just three months away. Surely, it is not lost on anyone that we have a very serious financial problem and that this problem must be resolved as we enter the next fiscal year. We must trim a very large deficit from the FY18 budget and leave that budget with a small reserve.

There are many reasons for how we got here: bad judgment, lassitude, bad luck, and, yes, aspiration--hoping for too much. Of the many reasons leading to our deficit, I blame complexity, unmanaged complexity; the complexity that large universities have brought upon themselves and that growing, modern populations have demanded. In times of booming economies, general societal wealth, generous financial allocations, the problems brought on can be ignored. In effect, the management of the institution goes untested. In times of scarcity, the errors brought on by complexity are sorely evident and must be managed.

While we are not a business, we must be businesslike in how we manage, pay for, and utilize this complexity, especially in times such as our own when resources are stressed, when the coffers are near empty. Our decisions must be based on a thorough knowledge of the consequences for those we serve. In our case, here and now, the solutions to our problems rest with us, nowhere else. There is no one, no entity outside of ourselves, that can solve our problems. We must do it. We are at a critical moment where we can act, and act together, for our common benefit and for the benefit of the university.

I am meeting with any and all who want to talk about Wright State and how we protect and grow the university. I welcome your thoughts and ideas at curtis.mccray@wright.edu.

I aim to communicate with you weekly, and in the weeks ahead, I will be providing more and more information to the campus community about what we are preparing to recommend to the Board of Trustees to resolve the deficit. We need as much involvement in this issue as we can muster, for we will all experience some pain as we do what we must. But to be clear, I will act to preserve and sustain the university.

I have returned to your campus, because in January when I looked into the faces of your students, I saw myself 60 years ago--wanting to learn, sensing there is something in the future waiting for me, hopeful of a new way of being, eager to test my way in the new world. We do not want to let them down.

Curtis McCray
Interim President

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