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From the Desk of the President

University President

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October 8, 2018 - From the President's Desk

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October 8, 2018 - From the President's Desk



Dear Campus Community,

What a difference a year can make.

When I came to Wright State, I was told the university was destined to go on state fiscal watch. Today those odds are very long, and so is the list of people on campus who have helped in some way to firm up our financial position. There's still more work to do, but we have made great strides—and we've done it together.

Now perhaps, as Robert Frost wrote, we have come upon two roads diverged in a yellow wood. Which path will we take?

This past year we had to focus much of our attention on a financial challenge that required clamping down on expenses. While we remain vigilant on the expense side of the equation, we must double down on our efforts to grow revenue. Not only must we maintain our financial discipline and the accountability that created a \$10 million surplus in FY18, but it's also time to relentlessly build enrollment and revenue for the future.

With that in mind I've asked Provost Susan Edwards to lead our Growth Mindset Advisory Team (GMAT), which has met weekly since August. The team includes members of the Wright State University Board of Trustees, key university leaders, staff from Enrollment Management, Marketing, Communications, Finance, and Advancement, as well as a faculty representative from the Faculty Senate's Faculty Budget Priority Committee.

The GMAT will provide to me an overarching report of recommendations to grow and diversify Wright State's revenue streams. The team members will use some important building blocks to guide their discussion, including the university's fiscal sustainability plan, the Ruffalo Noel Levitz enrollment report, the program effectiveness review, and the strategic plan, which is nearing completion.

The GMAT is working diligently to have its recommendations to me by December 31, 2018, so that implementation can affect the second half of FY19. Some of the early emerging ideas are already being implemented.

It is my great hope that you will help pivot the university to an innovative growth mindset as this group leads the way.

Author and psychology professor Carol Dweck says that "growth mindset" means that some of us see challenges as growth opportunities, while others view them as failures.

Dweck says that some encounter life's roadblocks and see finality as they cope with the new reality that's been forced upon them. Dweck describes those who react in this way as having a "fixed mindset." But others can be invigorated by setbacks and harness a "growth mindset" to learn a new skill or find a novel workaround to a

problem. Having a growth mindset is also said to be a habit of truly happy people. First applied to the psychology of the individual, Dweck has since expanded the idea to organizations.

Organizations with a growth mindset see obstacles as opportunities—challenges as chances to change for the better. However it's described, adopting a growth mindset helps to build resiliency with a response our namesakes were all too familiar with— all grit and no quit.

Wright State University is one of those organizations. We have a pioneering spirit. We may have challenges at our feet. But when we stand together we can make choices to grow, serve, and create new value for our students.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood ...

It is time for us to choose the road less traveled if we are truly committed to making all the difference for our students and the communities we serve.

Warmest regards,

Cheryl B. Schrader, Ph.D.
President

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