



OFFICE of the PROVOST

Update from the Provost

Dear Academic Affairs Colleagues:

We made it! The Spring 2021 semester is over. Thank you for once again getting our students through the semester in great form and for your commitment to keeping our (virtual) doors open and welcoming to students. Commencement was memorable in a different way than our past ceremonies, but it was great to gather for that time-worn tradition once again. This has been quite an academic year, and I am not going to recount the challenges and successes in this message.

You are no doubt aware of Governor DeSantis' recent order that suspended Florida's remaining COVID-19 health restrictions. The Board of Governors also released a [statement on May 5](#) regarding the expectation that SUS institutions will return to pre-COVID operations for Fall 2021. Together, we have navigated our institutional pathway through the COVID-19 pandemic environment thoughtfully and carefully. We have hoped ever since the pandemic forced us to change our operations that we would be able to return to campus, schedule more in-person instruction, host events in our facilities, and enjoy seeing one another face-to-face. I have even heard many of you say that you miss faculty meetings! All of this is happening with a sense of gladness tintured, perhaps, with a bit of caution, but we all have been preparing for this moment. Summer for us will be a final step toward a fall semester that will look and feel both familiar and new. I think it will be in a word, grand, to see our lonely campus come alive again with the people who make our campus into a university!

I want to remind all tenure-earning faculty who wish to extend their tenure clock by one year, and who have not already exercised this option, should complete the [COVID-19 Tenure Clock Extension Request form](#). Faculty scheduled to submit dossiers in Fall 2021 must submit this form by Friday, September 3, 2021. All others must submit this form by Tuesday, May 10, 2022.

There is one more update. Vice Provost Kimberly McCorkle has accepted the Provost and Senior Vice President position at East Tennessee State University and will be departing soon to take on this new challenge. I know everyone thanks her for her work in many areas in our division and wishes her well as she makes the transition. I am considering options regarding the vice provost position and will keep you apprised of plans for filling this position.

In closing, the time is near when we can reboot our campus, so to speak, and set a new course with continued care, but with a renewed sense of purpose, a deep understanding of how strong we are as the University of West Florida, and a large measure of optimism that we are serving the needs of our students, our community, our state, and beyond, come what may.

With great appreciation and gratitude,

George

May 13, 2021