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UA3/9/7 Farewell Message

WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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Fellow Faculty and Staff:

As I complete my WKU Presidency today, I want to offer a genuine thank you to all of our faculty, staff, and administration for your dedication to all things WKU. Julie and I have dedicated ourselves to our University to the best of our abilities since 1997. We are proud of the progress which has been made, and fully aware that such progress was made because so many people across our campus helped make it possible. We are also grateful for the private and public support which has been generously bestowed upon WKU since 1997, and for the talented student population, which you have helped bring to WKU. I trust that the collective body of work is something in which all members of the WKU family can take pride.

As a closing message, I offer four thoughts. First, please continue to recruit, retain, and graduate students from Kentucky, across our nation, and across the globe. A stable enrollment, including an improved rate of retention, will be critical to both our intellectual and financial stability in the future. Second, support President-Elect Caboni and our staff in the Office of Development as the University embarks on ever more important fundraising initiatives in the future. Only through your efforts and your talents will alumni and friends continue to invest in significant ways in WKU in the future. Third, take care of our campus. We have invested significantly for two decades in a campus rebuilding effort. While there is still much to be done both above and below the ground in the years ahead, we have raised a generation of students in recent years which takes pride in the campus. Let's keep it clean, vibrant, and safe for many years to come. Fourth, I encourage you to take our responsibilities in sustainability and resource conservation seriously. Our campus occupies a special place in our state and on our planet. Let's don't become complacent in encouraging sustainable behavior and leading by example for our students. We have converted to natural gas; we now have lead certification requirements in our construction; we recycle; and, we stock our food pantry. Let's keep building on this momentum.

One of my last acts as President was to apply for WKU to become a member of the University of the Arctic, which is a consortium of more than a hundred universities across the globe which are involved in the environmental and geopolitical solutions to preserving the polar ice cap. That may seem like a long way from the WKU campus, but our faculty, staff, and students need to understand just how important the Arctic is in addressing solutions to global warming and rising sea levels. We have been conditionally accepted into this consortium, and a vote on our application will occur by the Arctic Council at its annual meeting in Greenland in August. This is just one more international way in which we can learn from great universities across the globe.

Thank you one and all for your friendship and the opportunity to share this academic community with you. Julie and I look forward to being involved and supportive alumni for many years to come. Best wishes to each and every one of you.

Gary A. Ransdell