

Forward Together: President's July 2021 Message



Inspired by the past, focused on the future

For a quarter of a century, I've had the privilege of seeing our students step onto campus — some of them for the very first time — for the start of a new schoolyear. But this year is particularly special to me because it's the first year that I'll be watching from a presidential perspective.

The start of a new schoolyear is always so alive with hope and energy. From the flowering plants and our outstanding landscaping to the verve of our new and returning students, one can't help but be inspired by the promise of it all.

This year is no exception. With our campus opening back up, Wichita State is infused with a feeling of optimism — albeit cautious optimism. There are already countless plans in the works for campus activities, and I encourage each of you to take advantage of all Wichita State has to offer this fall, including homecoming, athletic events, and fine arts performances.



Dr. Richard Muma, president

Admittedly, there's still uncertainty about COVID-19, its variants, and the ever-changing information we are learning about COVID-19. However, we know so much more about the virus than we did a year ago, and we have tools to fight it. I cannot stress this enough: It's important that everyone who can get vaccinated, do so. It's the best chance we have of our lives going back to normal.

Also in the works for the fall: My [presidential inauguration ceremony](#), which is scheduled for Oct. 29. I've been a member of the Wichita State community — in some way or another — for more than 50 years, and I'm excited to formally celebrate this next chapter in my Shocker experience.

Since being named president in May, I've received so much feedback, advice, and support from Shocker Nation. People have shared such inspirational memories of Wichita State's innovation and perseverance, and they have such a clear vision of where we're headed in the future. I'm particularly encourage by the collective support I'm hearing around our institutional priorities:

Providing accessible and affordable educational opportunities for Kansas families.

Supporting Kansas businesses with a talent pipeline that meets employers' needs.

Increasing economic prosperity with higher education that benefits the state economy.

In the coming months, I plan to lead several formal and informal engagement sessions to talk about our priorities and how each of our stakeholder groups can contribute to achieving our goals.

There's no doubt that Shocker Nation is sitting on the precipice of achieving our vision of being one of the nation's most innovative urban public research universities. Your support along this journey is very much valued and appreciated.

Shockers!

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Muma

President of Wichita State University