



HLC Accreditation 2020-2021

Evidence Document

Academic Affairs

Office of the Provost

2019 Provost Welcome Letter

Additional information: See this evidence on the WSU web page:
https://www.wichita.edu/academics/academic_affairs/2019-provost-welcome-letter.php
(accessed May 3, 2021).

A Message from Provost Rick Muma

August 19, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the fall semester! It's been great to see everyone back on campus with new energy and excitement for the upcoming year. You know, it's kind of lonely without you all during the summer! Hopefully you were able to get some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

I want to first thank you so much for the work you accomplished last year. Even though last year was challenging for the campus with the passing of President Bardo, we were all able to continue the momentum and move forward without missing a beat.

I also wanted to let you know, I had a really nice dinner a few weeks ago with First Lady Emerita **Deborah Bardo**, and she is doing well. We shared a few laughs of course, as Deborah still has her great sense of humor. We will look forward to seeing her on campus this fall when the Experiential Engineering Building is formally named the John Bardo Center.

Last year brought many successes. We made amazing progress on the 2018-2019 [priorities](#) that grew out of our strategic planning processes. As many of you saw at the Aug. 14 kick-off event, those priorities will continue and [new ones](#) will be added so that we continue to make forward movement on our [strategic plan](#).

Engaging around these priorities will be especially helpful this next year as we present our progress on our strategic plan to the next president.

A few things that I'd like to point out where we have made some exceptional progress:

- We had another year of record enrollment growth, with overall growth of 4.7%, which included first-time college students, out-of-state students, online students and working professionals
- We've added three new degree programs, 14 certificates and 29 badges
- We've hired four deans: [Andrew Hippisley](#) for the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, [Dennis Livesay](#) for the College of Engineering, [Larisa Genin](#) for the Barton School of Business, and [Coleen Pugh](#) for the Graduate School
- In partnership with my office, the deans and the VP for research, we have made some major investments in research aligned with industry needs:
 - Hired a new graduate dean (as mentioned above), who's also the AVP for research and technology transfer and an internationally recognized polymer chemist
 - Key hires in engineering focused around data science

- A new director for the Regional Institute on Aging, **Carryl Baldwin**, who's also a professor in human factors psychology
- Hired our first faculty, **Edil Torres-Rivera**, for the beginning of a LatinX studies area and located in the College of Applied Studies
- Purchased a new high-performance computer cluster to allow for a more powerful computing environment for university researchers in need of this type of computing power

One of my major priorities as provost, and I know many of you, too, has been to continue providing opportunities for women to serve in senior leadership positions in academic affairs. To this end, I'm happy to say six out of 10 of our deans are now women, and all of the AVPs in my office are women.

In this light, this past year my office has supported a group of faculty researchers and administrators (led by **Jan Twomey** in engineering) in their efforts to apply for a National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE program grant to increase the representation and advancement of women and minorities in academic science and engineering careers. The goal is to contribute to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce. We received communication three weeks ago that we were approved for funding, which now helps us to

begin the planning process to diversify our faculty and staff even more.

As you can see, we are making great strides at WSU. None of this could be possible without each and every one of you. I can't wait to see what the new year brings.

I wish you all of the best for a great fall semester!

— Rick