

Dr. Fox's Retirement Announcement Letter to the MBU Community
8/22/22

Dear members of the Mary Baldwin family:

Today during the State of the University address, I announced that this academic year, my 20th as president, would be my last. I will retire on June 30, 2023. With humility, I have been extraordinarily honored to lead and serve alongside each of you. We have worked together with shared commitment to maintain our momentum with devotion to the mission, legacy, and promising future of Mary Baldwin University. My husband, Dan Layman, and I are truly blessed to be part of this community, and he has been an enabling and devoted partner to me and in our work for Mary Baldwin.

Over the past decade of far-reaching evolution, we built the Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences, transitioned from a college to a co-ed university, and continued programmatic innovation. This past year as we emerged from the pandemic we synthesized the components of our distinctive small university into a centralized and cohesive whole, with three colleges and plans in motion to create a dynamic new hub of student support through the University Center for Life Success. The Board has approved a new four-year financial and strategic framework, paving the way for a new phase of innovation and growth in this rapidly evolving landscape of higher education. That is why after careful consideration, I believe this is the best time to turn to the next chapter and prepare to welcome our 10th president next July.

Today I offer my deepest appreciation and abiding affection to everyone in our extended Mary Baldwin family.

To the Trustees: I'm grateful for your wise counsel, unfailing support, and generous stewardship of our mission and resources and the privilege to work with five exceptional Board chairs;

To my senior leadership teams, current and previous: you are my trusted colleagues and lifelong friends, thank you for your extraordinary collaboration and commitment;

To our outstanding faculty: thank you for inspiring the passion of intellectual pursuit and guiding our students on their academic and life journeys, and for carrying forward the ever-more relevant tenets of the liberal arts;

To our staff: you make this place work for our students and the entire community – whether you are behind the scenes or face-to-face. Please know I see and appreciate what you do to make a difference each day;

To our students: you are the reason we are here. You are a diverse landscape united by inclusive values of equity and justice. You have inspired me with your capacity for learning, you have challenged me to consider new points of view, and I have no greater joy than watching you exceed your expectations, become your best selves, and walk the commencement stage;

To our alumni: you are our legacy, agents of change and compassion, and we intend to live our promise to be your university for life. I have been constantly renewed by knowing so many of you and benefitting from your passionate engagement about how Mary Baldwin transformed you; and

To our donors and partners: we could not have reached this point without your faith in us and your generous devotion of treasure and talent. You turned our visions into reality. You kept our mission vibrant and the American dream alive for students. Our alliances strengthened our shared commitments to arts and culture, to economic development of our city and region, and to civic engagement locally and globally.

Remember we are strong because we know the power of community. Together we will continue to rise to each opportunity and challenge with confidence and grace. Our place in a changing world is what we make of it. Our core institutional characteristics are enduring: we navigate the space between what is and what can be. We find entrepreneurial solutions and realize them through grit and courage. Our rich 181-year legacy yields great strength. Innovation is informed by our traditions, living forces that animate the present and future.

I view this time of presidential transition as a dash – not a period. A dash signals an anticipation of continuity. And also, as you have indulged my passion and metaphorical references to music, this is a crescendo. Mary Baldwin will not suffer a diminuendo or a loss of momentum.

We will continue our work together in this spirit over the next months and await with confidence our outstanding 10th president.

Patricia R. Fox