

*Sent on behalf of Gabby McCree*

Dear Faculty and Staff:

As you know, the MBU Board of Trustees and administration has been working together to chart a path forward for a sustainable future. Higher education has reached an inflection point—one that demands strategic evolution to ensure the future of small, tuition-dependent regional institutions like ours. We are writing today to share our work thus far and outline the road ahead.

### **Background**

In October 2022, the MBU Board of Trustees engaged EY-Parthenon, a leading higher education consultant, to provide an independent analysis of Mary Baldwin's market position and develop a sustainable path forward that enables the university to deliver on its mission.

EY-Parthenon conducted its work in a phased process that included market research and development of various scenarios for Mary Baldwin's repositioning. After deliberate, data-backed evaluation, EY-Parthenon recommended that we design and launch a reimagined residential undergraduate experience that will lead the way for both MBU and higher education. It will combine the best of a liberal arts foundation, intentional workforce preparation, and hybrid instruction.

### **The results**

On April 13, EY-Parthenon presented its recommendation to the Board of Trustees. After careful review of the findings, the Board voted on April 26 to endorse the attached resolution to guide the next phase of this process.

We encourage you to review this resolution and the attached summary report endorsed by EY-Parthenon. This summary report provides additional context for the consultancy's work, as well as a summary of their findings and recommendations.

### **What's next**

EY-Parthenon's recommendation is a blueprint for the weeks and months ahead. We must now work together to determine the path forward that best ensures Mary Baldwin's future and will allow us to meet students' needs. Although the work began during the tenure of our 20-year president Dr. Pamela Fox, we will continue to best position MBU under the leadership of our incoming president Dr. Jeff Stein, who has helped lead Elon University's transformation as a national university over the past two decades.

As such, the Board has called for the formation of two creative teams:

1. The Academic Portfolio team, charged to reimagine the baccalaureate degree and build a new academic curriculum.
2. The Engaged and Experiential team, charged to envision the co-curricular elements required to support the combination of on-campus and off-campus experiential learning.

The Board's charge memo is also attached. These teams will begin their work immediately, with conclusions from the first phase to be reported to the Board of Trustees on July 20–21 and final recommendations to be delivered to the Board on October 19–20.

Additionally, we have recently engaged higher education consultant and enrollment partner EAB to conduct additional market research about this reimagined undergraduate experience.

This work involves building a new undergraduate residential experience and will result in changes within our university community. This process will have challenges, but we believe in the potential of this new direction as we strive to become a leader in higher education, meet the critical demand for student and workforce development, and ensure a thriving future for Mary Baldwin.

As always, we remain profoundly grateful for your patience and commitment to our mission as we navigate this important moment for our university. It will require our entire community—working together—to usher in this reimagined future for our beloved institution. If you have any questions or solutions, please don't hesitate to reach out directly to the vice president/dean of your college, the vice president for your department, or send an email to [reimagine@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:reimagine@marybaldwin.edu).

Thank you for all that you do to honor our legacy and prepare our future.

Sincerely,

Gabby McCree '83  
Chair of the MBU Board of Trustees