

Dear Colleagues,

As we prepare for a new semester, I write to update you on our continued work on the undergraduate residential program, started last January, to chart a course toward Mary Baldwin University's future.

Since early July, faculty, staff, administrators, the Board of Trustees, and two newly formed creative teams – [the Academic Portfolio Team and the Engaged Student Experience Team](#) – have been focused on building plans to help us: 1) meet our undergraduate residential students' needs, 2) evolve the best components of a first-class liberal arts education aligned with industry, 3) provide experiences that build durable skills, and 4) increase workforce readiness.

The work is informed by EY-Parthenon's consultation, presented to the Board of Trustees in April; timely NSSE data (recently shared with you); and enrollment partner EAB's preliminary market research that grants us direct access to the ideas, expectations, and aspirations of students we hope to serve. The creative teams, whose members are listed below my signature, are also guided by a commitment to an open, collaborative approach and will consider all viable solutions when building the path forward for the institution.

As the [Board mandated in April](#), our work must enable a financially sustainable future, with each segment (undergraduate residential, online, and college of health sciences) contributing positively to annual net revenue within the next three to five years. This work is challenging and exciting, but we cannot deny that some of the changes will be difficult and, if enacted, will directly impact the careers of some of our faculty and staff colleagues. Therefore, I want to be transparent about the options before the Board and the administration.

Looking Ahead

This work involves complicated steps that may affect students, faculty, staff, university planning, budgets, and employee contracts. At their October meeting, we expect the Board of Trustees will consider several actions including the following:

- Voting to approve the building and implementation of engaged and experiential learning programs for students as per the work of the Engaged Student Experience creative team
- Voting to approve a new streamlined general education program being designed by the Academic Portfolio creative team
- Asking the institution, based on the review by the Academic Portfolio creative team, to build new majors, revise or close existing academic programs, and build and implement teachout plans for students in any programs being closed
- Voting to amend a 2017–18 provision of the Faculty Handbook related to separation of tenured faculty when an academic program or department is eliminated (5.3.3.2)

As the Board of Trustees considers the start-up and closure of academic programs, we will work to find creative and compassionate solutions for employees impacted by program closures. We are committed to providing tenured faculty with 12 months notice or severance regarding program closures and meeting the deadlines for non-renewable faculty, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. We are also hopeful that this work will include transition assistance and the development of internal positions for which existing tenured faculty may apply. This afternoon, we engaged with the Faculty Council on all of these possibilities. We will consult with the Faculty Council regularly, and we will keep them — and you — abreast of developments on a consistent basis. To ensure we gather input from faculty and staff and engage in deeper discussion, we will also schedule a series of Town Hall meetings beginning in late August and early September.

Our Commitment

The challenges of this moment require that we simultaneously advance Mary Baldwin *and* support this community. The times demand that we listen carefully while changing wisely to meet students where they are and take them to where they want to be. Above all, we are committed to designing a liberal arts education that prepares our students for lives of purpose and professional success. I know that, working together, we will not fail them.

We do not take this work or the sobering decisions involved lightly, and we will work to listen to and support faculty and staff during this process. We are committed to sharing up-to-date information with you in as timely a manner as possible. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your supervisor, dean, vice president, or me, or send an email to reimagine@marybaldwin.edu. If you would like to speak with us yet this week, Vice President of the Gold College of Arts and Sciences/Dean of the Faculty Paul Menzer and I will be available tomorrow, Wednesday, August 16, from 4–5 p.m. in the president’s office on the third floor of Fox Hall (Administration Building).

Thank you for the care you take with colleagues and students. In my short time at MBU I am already deeply moved by your dedication to our community — especially as we weather this important moment in our institutional history.

All in for Mary Baldwin,

Dr. Jeff Stein
President

ENGAGED AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CREATIVE TEAM

- Chair: Will Webb
- Board of Trustees: Wendy Foster, Peter Gwaltney
- Staff: Andrea Cornett-Scott, Ernest Jeffries, Terry Djuric, Sarah Cochran, Thy Nguyen

Per the Board charge, the Engaged Student Experience Creative Team is now being organized into subcommittees, which will include faculty members.

ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO CREATIVE TEAM

- Chair: Paul Menzer
- Board of Trustees: Tim Powers, Susan Palmer
- Staff: Matt Munsey, Phoebe West, Carol Creager, Sheila Tolley, Sarah Cochran, Andrea Cornett-Scott

- Associate Deans: Kerry Cooke, Amy Diduch, Paul Deeble, Cat McPherson, Sue Stevens, Pam Bailey
- Faculty: Matthew Holman, Kwame Asante Akuamoah-Boateng, Sarah Kennedy, Rebecca Haberman, Kerry Mills, Carla Van Devander