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May 5, 2020

Dear Trustees,

Another month of "sheltering in place" has come and gone. But as the commonwealth turns from "red" to "yellow" and hopefully "green", there is reason for optimism that we are slowly returning to normal.

The Board of Governors held their quarterly meeting on the 29th of April and I participated along with everyone else via Zoom. I am sure that you are probably aware that the system has frozen tuition for the second consecutive year in an effort to help the students facing financial issues due to the pandemic.

The Board of Governors also approved a loan of up to six million dollars to Mansfield, the new coaches' contract, and an enhanced sick leave plan to encourage employee retirements.

During my segment of the meeting, I talked briefly about some of the changes that have occurred with the trustees over the past two years and thanked the governors for helping make trustee governance more effective than in the past.

I also spoke about my disappointment with the State Senate for their failure to follow through on the confirmation of the final group of 23 trustees. Although the Senate has had the list of names since February and had the confirmations scheduled for mid-March, they never took the time to make the appointments official.

I urged the Board of Governors to reconsider the PACT committee recommendations to make the appointments of trustees more open and less time consuming. I told the Board of Governors that one of the stumbling blocks to changing the trustee appointment process

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was the desire of the Senate to be involved with it. This needless delay made me question that seriousness of that desire. If we are truly going to be successful in system redesign, we need to shed the system of this sort of needless impediment to the governance process.

Many of the universities will have new student trustees next year. At this point, all our universities, with one exception, either have a returning student trustee or have submitted a recommendation for one. The Governor's office plans on appointing the new group of student trustees as soon as all graduating student trustees have completed their school year. I hope to work with the remaining university to submit their name so that we will have a full complement of student trustees by the end of May.

As I mentioned last month, the annual election of PACT officers will occur electronically this year since the spring conference has been postponed until fall. I anticipate that you will be seeing that ballot within the next week or two.

Stay safe,

