

president's **PERSPECTIVE**



The Way I See It

“It’s not light yet, but it’s getting there.”

This phrase, a play on the 1997 Bob Dylan song “Not Dark Yet,” lately keeps popping into my mind. It’s not light yet because we know the very real danger of living with COVID-19 will remain for months. But we also have the very real hope of returning to normal life by fall semester 2021. New vaccines make us confident that we will be able to resume much of our traditional on-campus life with all the activities and events that make our beloved university so special.

Now, as we near the end of 2020, I want to reflect on this unprecedented year both in the history of our university and our world. Never in recent memory have we seen our lives change so dramatically in such a short span of time. Yet, despite the pain born of this pandemic, every day I have seen reasons to be hopeful, thankful and joyful.

I watched our students and faculty rise to the challenges of remote learning and persevere to reach their goals,

pursuing groundbreaking research and dynamic teaching and learning. Kent State awarded more than 9,000 degrees in 2020 to students who overcame the odds created by this pandemic to

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complete their education and achieve success. Several of those recent graduates—and current students—are highlighted throughout this issue of the magazine.

I witnessed how our employees selflessly worked for reduced wages,

even at a time when they were being asked to do more every day to help the university confront the pandemic.

I noted your immense generosity with a record \$2.2 million donated on Giving Tuesday, and in the way so many of you supported the Kent State Emergency Grant Fund to help students facing hardships created by the pandemic.

In a year when our country was torn apart by political and racial strife, I saw the Kent State community respond with town halls and teach-ins to foster dialogue, increase knowledge and further understanding. Our newly created Anti-Racism Task Force will ensure that our university continues to be a diverse, inclusive and supportive community that stays true to our core values of kindness and respect in all that we do.

In 2020, I have seen our Kent State community come together in ways big and small to make sure that everyone is taken care of during this pandemic and to work diligently to develop plans to keep our campuses even safer in 2021.

I am confident that our spring semester strategy of expanded testing for students and wastewater monitoring for early virus detection, coupled with our proven Flashes Safe Seven protocols, will put us at the forefront of national best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and will create the safest possible campus environment. Our people deserve nothing less.

As 2020 has shown us, we can never predict what the year will bring. What I do know, though, is no matter what the circumstances, we can always count on our Kent State family to come together, take care of each other and work to change our world for the better.

I offer you my best wishes for a happy, safe and peaceful holiday season and new year that will bring us all good health and great success.

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