

From: Official ESU Email

Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021

Subject: A Message to ESU's Campus Community from Interim President Kenneth Long – February 26, 2021

It is with many mixed emotions that I am announcing the retirement of our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Jo Z. Bruno, effective late summer 2021. Over the past six years, Provost Bruno has been a champion of our students, our faculty, and our University on so many levels.

I, personally, have enjoyed working with Provost Bruno in my role as vice president for administration and finance and now as interim president. She understands the challenges we have as a University, especially during the pandemic, and despite the trials felt throughout higher education, she continues to be an amazing advocate for our students as well as her academic affairs staff, deans and faculty that work so closely with her. She sees the best in everyone. She is an advocate for every student on our campus and places her support firmly behind countless academic initiatives as a member of the leadership team, particularly WARRIORfish (Hobson's Starfish), the Department of Academic Enrichment and Learning (DAEL) scholarship, innovation, teaching and entrepreneurship (SITE) spaces and so much more. Beyond her work formal role, Provost Bruno remains a mentor to many students, faculty members and staff, sharing advice and creating learning experiences. Prior to COVID, she could routinely be seen at student and faculty events, performances, and initiatives long after the business day ended, and continues to do so today with the power of technology and Zoom.

Provost Bruno has cleared the path for many academic achievements at ESU throughout her tenure including: leading the completion of ESU's Comprehensive Planning Process; leading the completion of ESU's Goal Alignment; providing oversight and support for adopting new 45-credit general education (GE) program and supporting its phasing in and campus transition with accompanying new GE websites for students and faculty; leading the support and implementation of several academic programs including ESU's first two doctoral programs (education and health sciences), as well as two master's and four bachelor's degrees as well as 18 certification programs; launching ESU's Provost's Colloquium series, a continuing series of intellectually rich events that enable the campus and greater communities to come together in lively debate and share ideas; supporting the creation of unique SITE (scholarship, innovation, teaching and entrepreneurship) spaces on campus to help faculty, staff and students reimagine teaching, as well as establishing a faculty fellow position, coordinated with CREATE Lab; reorganizing the university's institutional research office into the expanded Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment to ensure trustworthy data informs university decision-making; and reorganizing the Department of Academic Enrichment and Learning (DAEL), placing it within the College of Education while transforming tutoring within the Warrior Tutoring Center (WTC), including writing, math, etc.

Provost Bruno was also instrumental in supporting ESU's Inclusion Poster Project and discussion sessions; developing and implementing the University's agreements with the Delaware Tribe and Rodale Institute; creating academic continuity planning including the creation of an Academic Continuity Team (ACT) which advised University leadership on academic actions during the pandemic with members of shared governance including individuals representing the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF), the University Senate, the Provost's Leadership Team, the University Wide Curriculum Committee, the Academic Chair's Council, the Student Government Association and the Registrar's Office; bringing collaboration and transparency to the University's Meet and Discuss meetings with APSCUF; leading others in the ongoing development of the University's strategic plan,

“Students First: Empowering Innovation through Collaboration 2017-2021”; organizing the successful adoption of Interfolio software to support faculty/student work as well as electronic dossier submission for personnel actions; the implementation of StarFish, software that enables students to increase their communication and connection with faculty and staff; establishing the Student Success Network, which provides students with personal communication with campus resources such as reminders, alerts about how they’re doing in class and how to make appointments with their professors; developing cross divisional taskforce on retention/progression/graduation; refocusing ESU’s office of grants and sponsored projects, particularly associated with awards of NSF grants in STEM fields such as clear path and esports; reinstating the Frederick Douglass scholar-in-residence program after years of hiatus; and partnering with former president Marcia G. Welsh, Ph.D., to charge a revised Diversity and Inclusion committee with commitments to a variety of diversity initiatives including the development of a more inclusive curriculum. Under Bruno’s leadership and in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, ESU has increased its efforts and results by hiring faculty of color and other diverse faculty in an effort to ensure a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

Jo Bruno defines these accomplishments as the direct result of team efforts that pride collaboration, collegiality, candid communication, and commitment

Provost Bruno remains very active within PASSHE and serves as one of the four CAO leads for the System’s Executive Leadership Group. With other Chief Academic Officers, she worked on a system task force charged with focusing on course sharing. Provost Bruno implemented faculty sharing and course sharing with sister schools during the 2020-21 academic year, placing ESU at the forefront regarding this endeavor.

Our campus will certainly lose some of its vibrancy when Provost Bruno retires, but she will leave us with us her indelible presence to uphold our campus commitment to student success and a diverse, equitable and inclusive Warrior family. Please join me in wishing Provost Bruno the very best as she explores the next chapter of her life. May her retirement be filled with rest, relaxation and opportunities to enjoy time with her life partner, Rich, and their recently rescued dog, Olivia, as well as her dear friends and family members. Undoubtedly Provost Bruno will be missed and will forever remain a part of the ESU community.

An Interim Provost will be named for the Fall 2021 semester. I expect a national search will be conducted after our search for a new ESU President is concluded.

Kenneth Long
Interim President

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