



# MEMO

**TO:** UMES Friends and Family:

**FROM:** President Anderson

**Date:** April 24, 2020

One of the questions that is asked of me quite often pertains to our campus's heralded tradition of football. I am aware of the contributions made by Art Shell, Johnny Sample, Emerson Boozer, and so many other Hawks - several of whom went on to great acclaim in the National Football League. I am glad our campus continues to recognize and celebrate the history of our gridiron greatness. Recently, a few alumni asked me to explain, "why not football today?" There are many reasons why it would be ill advised to bring back football now and you deserve a clear explanation. Allow me to outline the main points. First, and most obvious, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted virtually everything we do and put tremendous pressure on our campus personnel, finances, morale, etc. While the Coalition Lawsuit was legislatively settled recently, the distribution of funding still remains to be finalized and the pandemic has complicated this issue with additional pressure on State finances. An effort to bring back football would be perceived by the public, the University System, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and many directly affiliated with UMES as highly irresponsible. Our most important priority is increasing enrollment and bringing as many resources as possible to support our students. I cannot favor diverting any resources or attention from this critical goal. It is essential to recognize that 50% of our student body have an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0.0. This means the needs of our students are far greater than other USM campuses and very likely more than the vast majority of colleges and universities across the country. There are other campus priorities that deserve attention. These include shoring up several programs that have been under-resourced, where interim leadership has been treading water, and where additional resources for scientific instrumentation and academic programs are needed to fulfill our mission as a Carnegie Research institution. As you know, we are also moving forward with a newly reconstituted Physician's Assistant Program, which will help to address critical health care needs in our community and beyond. UMES also faces a large backlog of deferred property maintenance across campus. I am also committed to trying to

provide well-deserved salary support to many faculty and staff members who have not been able to receive merit or promotional increases for years. Football is incredibly costly. The expenses related to fielding a 65-player roster, with uniforms and related equipment is enormous. Other costs include multiple coaches, trainers, team physicians, travel to away games, and support for other personnel - not to mention the cost for a new stadium, which would likely run many tens of millions of dollars. Some have suggested that football will generate substantial revenue through gate receipts, concessions, and more. The reality is that most football programs are not profitable. The only programs that are profitable are high profile, D1 and Power Five programs that benefit from multi-million-dollar television contracts. In fact, a 2019 article from NCAA Champion Magazine states that "more athletics departments in autonomy [Power 5] conferences are self-sufficient, but others in D1 are increasingly subsidized. Schools in the autonomy conferences have held the line financially since 2005. Their average deficit in 2005 (\$2.5 million) doesn't look much different than it did in 2018 (\$2.6 million)." However, during the same period, the "average deficit among Football Bowl Subdivision schools in nonautonomy conferences ballooned from \$9 million to a record-high \$22.2 million." As such, the economics reveal a growing gap between actual expenditures and anticipated revenues even in the best funded football programs. Given all of the university enrollment challenges and strategic priorities, it is unlikely that the Board of Regents would even approve a proposal to bring football back to our campus. Adding football would also require us to add other sports for female athletes to satisfy Title IX requirements. This would be yet another cost that the University cannot afford to incur. I am sure you are aware my position as University President requires that me and my team, prioritize the needs of our campus daily. Making such decisions is clearly not without certain difficulties because we all want what is best at, and best for, UMES. Simply put, our educational mission comes first - and must remain first -as we all work toward fulfilling our mission.

With my thanks and Hawk Pride,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Heidi M. Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Heidi M. Anderson