



MEMO

TO: Hawk Family

FROM: President Anderson

Date: 1/15/2021

As I mentioned last week, I start each new year reflecting on the previous year...looking for lessons learned, areas for improvement, and contemplating hope going forward.

2020 started with the sudden tragic death of Kobe Bryant, his daughter and several others, and then we were introduced to the novel coronavirus, COVID 19 which quickly became the worst global pandemic of our lifetime. Our lives became disrupted, atypical, and our lives and livelihood threatened. We watched as history unfolded with world-wide deaths from COVID — the mourning of so many whom we loved; racial, civil, post-election conflict and calamities like we haven't seen before.

However, despite recent troubling events in our country, I find I am filled with gratitude and hope. Because through it all, University of Maryland Eastern Shore has not just survived, but has thrived. We have been successful on so many fronts and we have so much to be grateful for and hope for our future.

I am grateful for our students who persevered during a world-wide pandemic and managed to finish both the Spring 2019 and Fall 2020 semesters with grace and good humor. I am grateful for our faculty and staff who helped us manage the transition to hybrid learning, while also leading an extensive testing program to monitor incidents of the virus and to keep our campus safe. I am grateful that UMES experienced a very low incidence of infection, far below the rates in Somerset County and much of the state. I am grateful that we launched a new Physician's Assistant program to help address health care needs in the region as well as the health disparities we see among people of color.

I am also profoundly grateful that late in 2020, author and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott made the largest gift in our university's history -- \$20 million that will increase our endowment by

two-thirds and help us support long-term campus priorities. As I have said to many of you, I initially believed the inquiry we received in November to be a hoax – in this age of misinformation. After carefully exploring the call, we determined that Ms. Scott had indeed seen UMES as an opportunity. Her generosity was surely a welcome holiday gift during a year filled with so much devastation, turmoil, and political acrimony. Ms. Scott is an example to so many others who have reaped tremendous benefits of wealth and privilege, and who have the opportunity to do good while doing well!

And, I am hopeful! Hopeful that the New Year will deliver on its promise of a new administration and that vaccine rollout will ramp up and inoculate a majority of the population against the virus. We know 2021 will not be without challenges. Here on campus, we will be embarking on a new testing strategy that will include COVID testing twice a week (more details coming). We know hybrid learning is here this spring semester, and will be here to stay in some form as we go forward. We know that we will continue to recruit and orient new students in a hybrid fashion.

However, I am hopeful that in 2021 science will prevail over propaganda; that civility will overcome political polarization; that love will conquer hate. And know that we are truly witnessing history as Senator Kamala Harris, the first woman, the first African American and the first Asian American is installed as Vice President of the United States. I hope you will remain hopeful with me.

As we begin this historic week ahead, please also stay safe. Given that some state capitals are being threatened, as you will note in this attached statement, the American people are being asked to stay away from Washington, D.C. ([See this joint statement from Mayor Bowser, Governor Hogan and Governor Northam.](#)) I would ask that you heed the warnings, and watch the inaugural activities on television.

Finally, with this being the weekend that we celebrate the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I encourage you to spread kindness and dream big dreams for our futures.

With Hawk Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heidi M. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Heidi M. Anderson
President