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Amid budget cuts, WKU-Glasgow 'still committed' to offering courses and services

BY WILL PERKINS wperkins@glasgowdailytimes.com 7 min ago

Western Kentucky University-Glasgow during last year's Festival Cultural Hispano, an event that hosted high school students from around the region. While the festival was planned for later this month, it has since been canceled.

GDT File Photo



GLASGOW — Western Kentucky University announced in February that it would return its regional campuses in Glasgow, Owensboro and Elizabethtown to the Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) due to the university facing a \$15 million budget shortfall.

On March 9, the university confirmed that the regional chancellors at those campuses have been eliminated.

Sally Ray, who had been WKU-Glasgow's regional chancellor since 2011, has been retained on faculty, said Beth Laves, associate vice president for DELO at WKU, who spoke with the Glasgow Daily Times over the phone Friday morning.

According to a list of full-time budgeted positions that have been eliminated at WKU, the following additional positions have been eliminated at WKU-Glasgow: regional vice chancellor, office associate, communications coordinator and administrative assistant. Within the

university's Public Affairs division, the manager of regional campus marketing position was also eliminated.

WKU Media Relations Director Bob Skipper told the Daily Times over the phone Friday morning that employees in terminated positions were offered help in finding new jobs, but he isn't sure who has or hasn't taken advantage of that offer.

Although several positions were eliminated, Laves said the WKU-Glasgow campus "is still open" and "still committed to offering courses," adding that current students are working on courses now and students are also registering for the fall.

"We're moving forward," Laves said. "We've got staff there. They're great people.

"I would say that the students are not going to see a drop in services that they're used to."

Laves said DELO has been around since 2002-03, and is focused on educational outreach.

"We are very well-positioned to support regional campuses," she said. "I do not believe that there will be any loss of academic programs for our students."

Laves added that they are working hard to help WKU-Glasgow students continue with their education, and they are also working closely with Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College.

When asked if she thinks there will be more cuts to the regional campuses in the near future, Laves said "we don't know the answer to that" since the Kentucky General Assembly is still in session.

Skipper added that they "don't have a final budget, so we can't speculate" on future cuts.

WKU-Glasgow had planned on hosting its annual Festival Cultural Hispano — a Spanish festival that brought in high school students from around the region — later this month, but this event has been canceled.

When asked if she thought events like this would be canceled in the future, Laves said WKU-Glasgow will host its Graduand Ceremony at 5:30 p.m. on May 10 at the T.J. Health Pavilion Community Center. She said Miss Kentucky Molly Matney will be speaking at the event.

Laves said they are “very excited about that” and “hope everyone comes out and celebrates with us.”

In an email to the Daily Times sent last month, Skipper said WKU remains committed to serving students at its regional campuses “and the communities those campuses serve.”

“The changes brought about by the budget stabilization plan, including staff reductions, are largely in administrative areas and will not adversely impact students,” Skipper said. “We will continue to offer instruction via a variety of means as we explore options that provide the best fit to meet the needs of these particular students and communities.”

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