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Colleagues,

Tomorrow, UW-Parkside, UW-Milwaukee, Carthage College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and corporate partner EAB, are announcing the first-in-the-nation Moonshot for Equity partnership with the goal of eliminating gaps in graduation rates among white and historically underserved student populations. As President Kennedy set out his vision for the United States to land an astronaut on the moon within a decade, we are committing to achieving equity in student success in our region by 2030, an ambitious but attainable goal. Given the [worst-in-the-nation quality of life differences](#) among African American and white residents in Milwaukee and Racine, where better to make this commitment?

The Moonshot partnership will help us build our capacity to do what we are already resolved to do, especially at UW-Parkside. Colleagues across our four campuses will participate in equity-minded leadership development, collaborate with national exemplars Georgia State and University of Houston, continue to implement best practices at scale, contribute to student success scholarship, maximize use of EAB's predictive analytics platform, and learn from one another via regional and national convenings. We hope, with time, that additional Southeastern Wisconsin members of the 18-campus Higher Education Regional Alliance will join us. I want to share how proud I am of Chancellor Ford's leadership which was instrumental in cementing the Moonshot partnership.

At UW-Parkside, not only will we achieve this vision, I believe we will surpass it. In three of the last four years, six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshman set historic records. The latest rate of 39 percent is almost 50 percent above the historic average (and second highest ever after the previous year's record). The latest rate for underrepresented minority students of 34 percent is a historic high and not too far off from the overall level. Graduation rates for our African American students in the latest year (32 percent) are about double the 10-year average. Our goal is not only equity in rates, but also to continue to increase graduation rates for all our students!

When we surveyed faculty, staff, students, and campus leaders to help set priorities for the 2017-2020 Academic Plan, improving student success was considered to be an important goal by the largest number of our colleagues. Our collective efforts have made the progress to date possible and, I have no doubt, will keep us moving forward toward our goal of achieving 50 percent six-year graduation rates for all our students by 2025.

Thank you for all you do!

- Rob

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