



“Our Finest Hour” October 16th, 2020

Was a frosty Friday morning, and the plump pumpkins peered prominently between the crunchy corn stalks still standing between rows of peas and poblanos. (Love alliteration.) Good thing we picked peppers Thursday evening. Grandkids will be out Sunday to search for the best pumpkins to pick and carve. Granddad will be roasting the seeds for football game snacks. Deer ate most of the collards and butter beans, but enough were overlooked to make one mess of tasty pot licker. Butternut squash are stored in the basement, and before long it will be time to start opening jars of green beans and remembering the 2020 bounty.

Been reading of late about the psychology of virtual social interactions versus the “real McCoy.” According to some, for example, during young adolescence (AKA the middle school years), rapidly developing “pre-teens” struggle to create identities if they cannot have tangible, in person interactions. Parents may think social distancing actually helps with child rearing during this awkwardly difficult time, but evidently their “peace of mind” is misguided. True, the human species thrives together, not alone. And since we have been hearing since March that we will survive the pandemic “together,” it has become cliché. Still, much is being written about college students reaching out for support during the pandemic. I suspect their needs for reassurance from peers and professors will grow between now and the end of the semester.

Speaking of reassurances, during the Board of Governor’s meetings this morning, the financial outlook for MSU was discussed. Given recent improvements, Provost Einhellig is now able to release funding throughout the academic colleges. This was mentioned again in this afternoon’s meeting – where I am currently. COE should have enough resources now to begin searches for two assistant professor positions, one associate professor, one clinical instructor, and a department head for CLSE. The Counseling Program needs two positions, and CEFS needs two positions. RFT was fortunate enough to have filled positions just in the nick of time to avoid the “freeze.” All three academic departments in COE are in need of additional faculty positions. I remain optimistic these can be met by and by, so the number of per course hires can be reduced. Great to be able to move in this direction as other IHEs are heading down a different path.

I will work with our department heads to form search committees as soon as next week to begin processes that, I hope, will result in hiring decisions to be made in time for new personnel to begin by August 1, 2021. Thanks to the Missouri Legislature, the Governor’s Office, and a number of COE personnel who worked hard to recruit students, we are back on top in terms of the fiscal perspective.

Keep Calm and Plan for the Future,

David