All,

Liz Russell has shared that she is stepping away from the role of Vice President for Academic Affairs.  Liz has served in this role for five years and has achieved many accomplishments including shepherding the development of new programs, overseeing activities related to our NECHE accreditation, hiring outstanding faculty and staff to lead the academic affairs agenda, supporting faculty and students with issues large and small, and representing the College in System-wide academic planning and implementation, to name a few.  She has done an exemplary job.

Liz approached me a few months ago, sharing her intention to retire within the next two years and asked to take on a different role at EMCC.  She shared her interests were in planning, project management, and process improvement related to the important initiatives critical to our success.  Through several conversations with Liz and others, I agreed to support Liz’s request.  Liz has been a part of EMCC’s rich history for 26 years teaching, supporting students and leading the academic affairs division.  She will continue to provide integral leadership and support, but in a different way.

While I am very supportive of Liz and her new role, I realize the ongoing transition and changes we are experiencing at EMCC and for that matter in higher education.  There is always more to learn, more to understand, and more to do.  At this same time, we are evaluating our work on our five-year strategic plan, integrating the NECHE accreditation recommendations, and other requests and initiatives.  It is a lot; and it is important work.  Our outcomes and the results we are striving for are critical.  I want to make sure we continue to grow and improve in ways that have meaning for our students, our partners, and each of us.  There is much work in front of us – good work, but it will require everyone to come together.

Given that, I have asked Brian Doore to provide interim leadership for both the Academic and Student Affairs divisions.  Brian has been in his role as Dean of Students and Chief Student Success Officer since July.  In that time, he has worked to get to know our institution and the needs of our students and partnering with the Student Success team to provide important and high quality services and resources.  During this time, he has also led the development of the fishbowl series where community partners come to EMCC to engage our students.  He has partnered with Liz Daigle to revise several of our accommodations processes to increase responsiveness to students while improving efficiencies.  Throughout the fall, he partnered with Mike Schwabenbauer to write and submit a 1.7 million  TRiO Student Support Services grant.  Most recently, he has begun work related to assessment and conducted an assessment charette process.

Liz will work with Brian providing counsel and assisting with the transition to her new role.  She will also assist and provide leadership to several initiatives including:

* Assisting with the roll out of Brightspace D2L
* Preparing for the spring NECHE visit of off campus sites
* Completing the Perkins Comprehensive Needs Assessment
* Supporting the Admissions team through their process improvement work

This is an important time in higher education and at EMCC.  With this decision and our state’s demographics, workforce needs etc.  I propose that we take some time to think about, connect, and engage in conversation, examination and design and transform around critical questions including:

* What is the future of higher education and how does that impact EMCC?
* What does student success mean?
* What organizational structure helps us to get there

Over the next several days and after meeting with faculty and college senates, we will identify next steps and timelines that will help us move forward.  All information and updates will be shared regularly.  Thank you for your support for Liz and Brian in these roles.