

UNC System President Cites Personal History And Commitment In Video Address To UNC Employees

By Administrator
Monday, 03 August 2020 08:35 -

University of North Carolina System President Peter Hans released the following statement and video to UNC System employees.

Hans assumed this role on August 1. Hans succeeds Margaret Spellings, who served as president of the UNC System from March 1, 2016, until March 1, 2019. Dr. Bill Roper has served as interim president since January 2019.

Video transcript

I'm Peter Hans, and I'm enormously proud to be the new president of the University of North Carolina System.

Today is my first day on the job, but I'm no stranger to this remarkable institution. I'm a graduate, past Board member, and I've worked closely with many of you during my time as president of North Carolina's community colleges.

I've been a grateful friend and supporter, and today I become your colleague.

We're facing a moment like no other in American higher education. A pandemic that has disrupted every aspect of our lives and work. Protests that speak to the ideals of our nation. An economic downturn that will deepen the value of our work while also making it harder.

Lives, livelihoods are under threat. All of us are under immense stress. Many are in grief. Which is simply to say, we'll all need grace and kindness in the days to come.

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So let's offer it to one another. We'll all need good will and good faith, so let's grant it to one another.

There's never been a more apt time to love thy neighbor, and the UNC System is a very big neighborhood.

The tests in front of us are daunting. This University was not built for easy things. It was built for the hard and worthy work of public service. And planning for the months ahead, we're asked to balance public health with our core mission of public education.

We must do right by our students while also protecting our communities and our colleagues.

There are no easy answers to those tensions. But they mirror the complex challenges our entire society is facing right now, and I think it's our duty to help chart a path forward.

That's what the university has always done with its greatest contributions coming in times of deepest need. I'm amazed at the resilience of our faculty and staff in managing the sudden shift to online learning in the spring.

It was an achievement of staggering scale, and it gives me hope for how will continue to adapt – online in person or a combination. Come what may, we will deliver for our students.

We all know what's at stake. Families are counting on us for new opportunities for better prospects amidst this uncertainty.

Our state is counting on us to help drive the struggling economy and provide answers to the most pressing questions of our time.

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So here's my pledge to you: I'll be here each and every day with an open heart, open mind, doing my best to offer steady, stable leadership and support your best work.

We will encounter more than enough turbulence without creating any of our own.

I'll be an effective and responsible advocate for funding and public support, upholding this University's twin commitments to affordability and excellence. And we all know that the cost of a degree has risen too far too fast. We've got to change that. It's vital for our economy, our democracy, and our culture.

I'll work to make higher education trusted and accessible, and relevant for the people of the state. I'll embrace the public schools, community colleges, and private institutions as full partners in our mission.

And I'll testify anywhere and everywhere I can to the redemptive power of education, because education is most potent medicine we have for the health of our people and the surest route to shared prosperity.

Knowledge is the antidote to what ails us, whether it's a virus, racism, or an absence of opportunity.

No matter who you are, where you live, who you love, what you look like, what you believe, where you came from, we're all imperfect and striving—all linked by a common fate, all deserving of respect and dignity.

Those are the truths we're called upon to defend. The care we're obliged to give. The values we protect most dearly in times of greatest difficulty.

I'm proud to stand alongside of you, proud to be a small part of this great work.

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Thank you.