

*Bender
of
Twigs*

Richard Muma

Rick's lifelong relationship with Wichita State University has left an indelible mark on his leadership and dedication to this institution. He has seen the university grow from a municipal university to the vibrant, student centered, research focused campus it is today. In fact, it is no accident that this year, his first year as President of Wichita State University, the university is seeing record enrollments not seen for 30 years.



Much of the change that WSU has experienced can be attributed to Rick's roles in senior leadership. While he often shares stories about his experiences visiting the WSU campus as a young child, his professional career with WSU began in 1994 when he came here to serve as the Department Chair for the Physician Assistant program until 1999. With only a short break in his tenure with WSU, he left for one year to lead the Physician Assistant program at St. Louis University, he quickly rose to senior leadership positions serving as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management, Executive Vice President and Provost, and finally, President.

Last May, when the Kansas Board of Regents announced his appointment as President, it was met with great enthusiasm and energy from the campus community, largely because of the relationships he has built serving our university, our students and his colleagues. For this reason, it was important to try to capture some of those voices here. Most of these comments are a compilation of responses received from people across campus who represent so many others' experiences with, and appreciation towards Rick. As a First-Generation college graduate, Rick understands from first-hand experience the challenges and obstacles that our students face on a daily basis. Many of those people whose lives he has impacted have talked about his respect and compassion for those with whom he works. Frequently, Rick's background in healthcare comes to the forefront in his role as an administrator. He'll diagnose challenges, listen for underlying and fundamental problems, identify and assess best-practice treatment and strategies, and prescribe a plan to move forward.

On behalf of the many individuals represented by this grateful university, it is my honor to congratulate Rick on being inducted into the Bender of Twigs.

Shirley Lefever, Ph.D.

Interim Executive Vice President and Provost

With contributions from Linnea GlenMaye,

Bobby Gandu, Kim Moore, Amy Drassen Ham, Nikki Rogers