

RESOLUTION E07-15

EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION AND CONFERRAL OF THE TITLE OF PRESIDENT EMERITUS TO DR. RITA RICE MORRIS

WHEREAS, Dr. Rita Rice Morris became the fifth president of Shawnee State University in 2003, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris has held that position for 12 years, making her the longest-serving president in Shawnee State University history, and

WHEREAS, during that time, Dr. Morris led the university through a period of unprecedented growth in academic programming, student services, facilities, enrollment, partnerships, and community support, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris oversaw significant improvements in access to education during her administration, with a decade of record-breaking enrollment, an overall increase in enrollment of 17% between 2003 and 2014, and an increase in degree attainment of 48% during the same time, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris brought greater focus to student success, overseeing efforts to improve course completion and graduation rates including the creation of the University College, development of a focused strategic completion plan and a campus-wide approach to retention; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris responded to growing enrollment and evolving needs of students with more than \$26 million in campus expansion, renovation, and improvements during a time of reduced state funding, by developing unique partnerships to accommodate growth and enhance student life including the first student-administration partnership that allowed for expansion of the University Center; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris led efforts to gain support for and bring regional, state, and national attention to innovative programs including digital simulation and game design, now ranked among the top 25 such programs in the United States, Canada, and abroad; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris raised the bar on quality during her presidency, with an increased number of programs seeking and achieving accreditation, converting to semesters, and adoption of the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) process improvement model; and

(May 8, 2015)

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris furthered Shawnee State University's recognition of being a regional university with a global outlook by executing international education/exchange agreements with 14 partner universities, a significant increase; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris set a vision for Shawnee State University's future with the completion and advancement of a 20-year Master Facilities Plan and the completion of the largest fund-raising campaign in Shawnee State history; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris raised visibility of Shawnee State University by serving in leadership roles in state and national organizations and committees dedicated to advancing higher education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Morris' leadership extended beyond campus to make a difference in the region with the largest increase in community service projects, partnerships, and collaborations with local agencies, organizations, and businesses during her administration; and

WHEREAS, the Trustees of Shawnee State University shall remain eternally grateful for the lasting transformative impact of Dr. Rita Rice Morris on Shawnee State University and this community;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Shawnee State University confers upon Dr. Rita Rice Morris the title of President Emeritus, effective July 1, 2015.

(May 8, 2015)