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A Research Leader

University of Dayton

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A Research Leader

John Leland, interim vice president for research for the University of Dayton and executive director of the Research Institute, will step into those roles permanently, effective July 1.

Leland succeeds Mickey McCabe, who joined the University of Texas at Arlington Research Institute as executive director in October.
"Throughout his 14-year career at the Research Institute, John has been an excellent strategic leader and collaborator and integral to the institute's outstanding growth," said University President Daniel Curran. "He is well-respected in the public and private sectors.

"His work at all governmental levels and with our corporate partners has advanced the research and economic development priorities for our nation and region."

As the University's chief research officer, Leland will be responsible for charting the strategic direction of the Research Institute, which expects to exceed $97 million in revenues during fiscal year 2015, an 11 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

Leland was named director of the Research Institute in 2005 and has also served as associate vice president for research and director of intellectual property.

With a staff of 450, primarily researchers, the institute currently is under contract for more than $500 million and supports nearly 250 undergraduate and graduate students. More than 90 faculty members are engaged in sponsored research programs at the University.

"John has demonstrated strong commitment to strengthening and strategically focusing research resources and infrastructure to generate high-quality research at the University," said Paul Benson, interim provost. "I look forward to working with him and the deans to elevate academic research and scholarship, as well as promote increased collaborations among faculty and institute researchers."

He also will be responsible for ensuring sponsored research programs are consistent with the University's Catholic and Marianist mission, Benson said.

Leland has been a strong contributor to many initiatives that have led to the University's outstanding research growth. He successfully lobbied the state of Ohio to allow the private university to compete in its Third Frontier Project, which resulted in more than $50 million in awards to the University and recognition by the state for the University's technology-based economic development contributions.

Leland regularly works with state and federal legislators to develop policy and projects that have to date yielded more than $50 million in additional funding to the University.

"We want to sincerely congratulate John and are looking forward to working closely with him," said Ricky Peters, executive director of the Air Force Research Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. "University partnerships are vital to AFRL and UDRI is an important strategic partner in
Leland was a key contributor to the GE Aviation EPISCenter project, developing the initial relationships with GE and acquiring $7.6 million in state support that helped establish the corporate research and development center on campus.

He previously served as a congressional science fellow in the office of former U.S. Rep. Tony Hall. He frequently contributed to policy debates on the importance of engineering education and research funding and, since joining the Research Institute, has written and given similar testimony before Congress.

Earlier in his career, Leland served for 16 years as a researcher for the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, where he conducted his own independent research and led a research group in the propulsion directorate. He holds eight patents, and he’s authored or co-authored more than 60 technical publications. He is an associate fellow of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics and a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Leland holds three degrees in mechanical engineering — a B.S. from the University of Akron, an M.S. from the University of Dayton and a Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky.

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