

May 13, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

You will continue to see activity around our residence halls this week as undergraduate move-out continues. With more than 1,000 student appointments scheduled to accommodate differing state travel restrictions, the process will continue through the end of June. Check-out is being carefully regulated and scheduled through the Student Life Office, with particular attention paid to our community's health and well-being.

Two weeks after the May 1 decision deadline, undergraduate deposits (529) continue to outpace last year's numbers and are even with the number of deposits from the record year 2016. Now the College and the School of Theology move to the enrollment phase as we work through the tasks and activities required to begin classes in the fall.

In regard to the upcoming academic year, the Fall Operation Groups (FOG) continue to develop plans for the University's functional areas that aim to address the health, logistical, and financial challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans will accommodate scenarios that include in-person, remote, and HyFlex learning models.

An important part of our fall preparations is bringing employees back on campus. As I mentioned last week, the University is developing a data-informed three-phase plan to shift gradually from our current mostly remote model to one in which employees are working on campus. The plan aims to help protect the health of employees, help ensure the well-being of our community, ensure continuity of our operations, and carefully and methodically prepare for students returning in the fall. You will hear more about this plan in the coming days.

As you all know, Commencement Weekend had been scheduled for last week, but like all other campus events this spring it was postponed until the University can hold the events safely. So this year, addresses were given, awards were announced, and degrees were conferred by video. You can watch the [College](#) and [School of Theology](#) ceremonies on the University website. A highlight of the presentations is the [Baccalaureate Address delivered by Linda Mayes, C'73, H'94](#), concluding this academic year's celebration of 50 Years of Women at Sewanee. Mayes is the Arnold Gesell Professor of Child Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Psychology at Yale and currently serves Sewanee as a distinguished visiting professor of psychology. She was in Sewanee's first class of women and was the University's first female valedictorian. Read more about the [College](#) and [School of Theology](#) ceremonies, including information about some of the student honors.

Five college faculty members recorded brief talks about their research for a Sewanee "takeover" this week of "[The Academic Minute](#)." *Inside Higher Ed* is featuring a different Sewanee faculty member each day, and the segments are airing on 70 radio stations across the United States and Canada. Featured on the takeover are Kelly Whitmer, Rob Bachman, Bill Engel, Katie Nelson-Coffey, and Katie McGhee. "The Academic Minute" is a radio program and podcast that presents academic research in an accessible way. The program (which really runs 2.5 minutes) features researchers at colleges and universities around the world.

From My Perspective

We all know the adage: You don't appreciate what you have until it's gone. I'm sure there are any number of things you miss that you never thought much about. We all probably have a pretty long list, and we're adding new things to it all the time. The thing that hit me late last week is the Fourth of July celebration. When our kids were younger they swam for the Tigersharks, and the team always had a float. Fourth of July was the day that they could run off and be all over town without us. We'd regroup after the parade and go home for a family nap (everyone being hot, grumpy, and tired), or watch Catherine Cavagnaro fly loop-the-loops at the airport from our porch. Then we'd go back out for a cookout with friends, the SSMF July 4th concert, and the fireworks. The fireflies at dusk at Lake Cheston are magical. We didn't always go to the flag raising, mutt show or cat show, but we always hit the craft fair and watched the parade (so many times in the rain!) and saw so many people who would come back to Sewanee for the week. Fourth of July in Sewanee is iconic. It is easy to get jaded, but it is hard to believe that we will not be able to celebrate it the same way this year.

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost