

June 24, 2020

Dear Friends,

Updates

The Board of Regents was in town last week. We usually provide a summary of the board's actions in person at open staff and faculty meetings. This time around was a little different, of course! I provided the update yesterday in an open Zoom webinar with almost 200 employees participating. It was recorded in case you were not able to attend, and that recording can be [found here](#). Thank you to those who were able to join. It sounds like people are interested in how safety measures such as testing and masking will work as we return to campus. We were able to answer a few of your questions yesterday, and we'll have more to say about safety measures for employees and students next week.

The two main topics at the Regents' meeting were planning for the fall semester and the budget for next fiscal year. As previously communicated, we are planning for two possible fall scenarios: 1) mixed-mode with most students and faculty members on campus, and instruction both in-person and remote; and 2) a fully remote instructional semester. The FOG teams summarized their planning for both of these scenarios for the Regents. Some of what they heard about the fall is summarized below. The board approved the proposed budget with the expectation that we will revisit the budget after the beginning of the fall semester.

The Regents were also updated on our capital projects and toured (in person or virtually) the [University Wellness Commons](#), the [University Bookstore](#) and [Saints Rest](#). Click on the corresponding link to watch the virtual tour.

The FOG is hard at work identifying decisions that can be made now.

The FOG Information Technology team has been diligent, and we now have a comprehensive suite of information technology upgrades underway. These upgrades are needed so that we can be flexible in our teaching and learning next semester. The campus wireless network will be improved with dedicated wireless access points in classrooms and other learning spaces, as well as better 5G Wi-Fi coverage in residence halls. And new software will allow for adequate physical distancing in computer classrooms, as well as offer a solution for students who are learning remotely.

The FOG IT team collaborated with the College and School of Theology academic teams to identify 17 spaces that are large enough to accommodate in-person classes and remote participation. These learning spaces will include a base system that has flexibility and future expansion in mind. Faculty members in particular may be interested in these technology details. The core of the system will be the WolfVision Cynap—a powerful collaboration and wireless presentation system—and a Planar touch screen monitor with built-in camera. A professor will enter the classroom and can activate the session by wireless connection from their laptop. This will turn on the projector and monitor, and lower the screen system. From there they can select to start a classroom session or start a Zoom session. Classrooms will have an auto-tracking camera that will follow the professor in the front of the room for those learning remotely and a ceiling microphone to pick up the instructor as well as the students. The system will be interfaced with a Panopto video system for recording and streaming. A vacancy sensor will automatically shut the

classroom system off after 10 minutes of no activity. The full suite of IT upgrades is projected to be completed by the beginning of August at a total cost of about \$1.1 million.

The College academic team is tackling a number of different issues. They are in the process of identifying alternative learning spaces that can accommodate necessary distancing, including tents! They are thinking about the optimal classroom setup, and considering the amount of time we may need to have between classes to accommodate classroom cleaning and modified traffic flow in buildings. No decisions on these items are available just yet. The spaces will look different this fall, but the team is committed to keeping the educational experience truly “Sewanee.”

As you know, Sewanee Dining never stopped its operations. They have been providing food for the limited number of students who have remained on campus. They are now deep into their planning for how to ramp up services when students return. They are considering satellite sites for meal pick-up, revised seating and flow in McClurg, and extended hours—but the food and experience will not suffer.

Introductions

Tomorrow, Vice-Chancellor Brigety will hold a series of Zoom meetings with the extended Sewanee family. A meeting with the Joint Faculties will be held on Thursday, [June 25, at 9 a.m.](#) Faculty members are invited to submit questions prior to the meeting using [this form](#). Staff members will meet the new VC on Thursday, [June 25, at 2 p.m.](#) Please submit [your questions here](#).

From My Perspective

So how comfortable are you wearing a mask or cloth face covering? I find it exhausting! It is one thing to throw one on to go into the grocery store (well, David does most of our grocery shopping), but it is an entirely different experience to wear one all day. At least that was my experience at the Regents’ meeting last week. And now at work, while I can take it off when I am in my office, I end up wearing one for several hours a day. I have to remember to put one on whenever I leave my office, so I keep one hanging on my doorknob or I’ll forget it! But it is a habit that we all must get into, and I encourage you to practice, too. I am glad that I am getting a head start. Remember, a mask only covers your nose and mouth, not your talent or personality!

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost