

February 17, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Planning

We have determined that Summer School will be available to students in the same teaching modes being employed during the regular semester. That is, some classes will be completely remote while others will be in-person with the added possibility of students signing up remotely. We will continue to work out summer COVID-19 protocols and work with individual programs to determine how they may be able to have on-campus participation that does not put Summer School at risk.

The FOG is winding down its work. We will have one last meeting tomorrow. The FOG's main purpose was to plan how to open and stay open. In August, we immediately pivoted to planning for this spring semester, and we did a lot of troubleshooting as we "worked the friction out of the system" as David Shipps would put it. We feel confident in our established protocols and in our ability to adjust as necessary.

COVID-19 Testing

We couldn't ask for better results from our testing! We had no student positive tests last week, and only two employee positives. We ran a total of 1,726 tests. With only the two positive results, that is a 0.12% positivity rate. See the University's testing results published each morning on our [Daily COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Testing, like a lot of things, has been interrupted this week due to the weather. If you were scheduled to test this week, please do your best to do so within the limits of safe travel. We hope to get all our scheduled testing completed by the end of the week.

Don't forget that the 3W's remain our most powerful tool to combat the spread of this disease: [Wear your mask](#). Wash your hands. Watch your distance. It's important to follow good [COVID-19 protocols](#) both on campus *and off campus*, and [to continue to limit your social interactions](#).

Surveillance test results are available the day after testing, and you will receive a communication only if the results are positive. Remember that employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and who are working on campus may request to be tested by our team by calling 931.598.1010 (please do not show up at the Fowler test site unannounced). Employees who receive positive test results must work with their primary care providers to determine how to proceed and must follow University policies related to COVID-19 and sick leave.

Mental Health Resources

I am reiterating this information from my communication last week: We are midway through February, which tends to be a difficult month. The winter break is behind us, and the pace of our

work has intensified. The weather can be cold, dreary, and foggy, and the days often feel long and dark. And we may be house-bound by the weather and the pandemic. It's not surprising that mental health challenges tend to increase during the month of February. It's important this month to pay attention to changes you may be experiencing in your own well-being, as well as changes you may notice in your colleagues. Prioritize your self-care, and reach out to your colleagues with kindness to share a thoughtful word or gesture. Seek support when you need to do so. You might consider using a mental health app that all Sewanee students and employees now have *free** access to: [Sanvello](#). Sanvello is one of the highest-rated apps for managing stress, anxiety, and depression. This app can be used by anyone with a [sewanee.edu](#) email account; use your Sewanee email address to set up your Sanvello account. Employees also have access to counseling services through the University's Employee Assistance Program. Details are found on the [Human Resources](#) website.

**Free access is provided with funding from a SAMHSA, Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant.*

Other University News

The Board of Regents held its February meeting virtually on Monday, Feb. 15. It was quite a feat to stay connected as power outages cycled across campus! However, in the end we were able to complete the meeting. Details of actions taken by the Board will be outlined by the vice-chancellor at the upcoming Open Staff meetings (March 3 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., via Zoom—more information to follow in the coming days). Please send any questions or issues you would like to have addressed to Employee Advisory Committee Representative Tammy Elliott (tmelliot@sewanee.edu) or Human Resources Representative Jessica Welch (jewelch@sewanee.edu) by March 1. You can send your questions either through the SPO or to the representative's respective email address. On the recommendation of the Employee Advisory Committee, we ask that all questions include the name of the submitter (no anonymous submissions). Faculty will receive their regular report in the coming weeks.

The 55 Years of Black Alumni celebration is continuing throughout this month. Originally planned for last fall, it is being celebrated virtually during the month of February (Black History Month). For almost a year, a committee of alumni and staff has worked on planning a meaningful series of events to mark this milestone. I hope you've noticed the banners up around campus! See the event information and schedule on the [55 Years website](#). In particular, you are encouraged to participate in a celebration next week, Thursday, Feb. 25, to honor Eric Benjamin, C'73, who retired last summer. I hope you had a chance to participate in the Roberson Project presentation, "The Untold Tales: A Conversation on the Historic St. Mark's Community". You can [watch the replay here](#).

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost