

Sept. 16, 2020

Dear Friends,

### **Spring Planning**

So far we do not have much to report in the way of decisions regarding plans for the spring semester. We are considering the weather and our spaces (indoor and outdoor), the academic calendar, and the class schedule. We are reviewing many options and will be soliciting your input soon. We'll probably start the semester later than currently scheduled, and I imagine that we will not have a spring break. Our current goal is to start and end largely on a regular schedule so that we do not disrupt summer programs and classes to a significant degree. But exactly what it will look like is unclear at this time. Other schools are clearly considering the same elements that we are, and some, such as [Carnegie Mellon](#), have already announced a start date of February 1.

### **Testing**

Results from last week's COVID-19 testing were better than those from the previous week. The number of people testing positive was lower, and positive tests did not represent an affinity group. Of course, every week starts a new round, but so far we have not strained our quarantine resources. See the University's testing results on our [Daily COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

### **#ProtectTheBubble**

Some of you have expressed interest in how we are handling undergraduate student COVID-related infractions. The first thing to note is that most of our students are following the rules and understand that these regulations are in place to help ensure they can continue to have an on-campus experience. But as I am sure you can appreciate, it is hard to follow all of the rules all of the time. Major infractions include behavior such as blatantly not masking, leaving the Domain without permission, having outside visitors to campus, and not complying when asked to follow our policies. For the first major COVID-related infraction, College students are sent home to study remotely for a two-week quarantine period; they are required to take the University COVID-19 test (with a negative result) in order to resume in-person classes. A second major COVID-related infraction would result in the student being sent home to study remotely for the remainder of the semester. As of yesterday, 19 students have been sent home for 14 days. Additionally, warnings have been issued to 142 students for non-major violations of community health standards.

### **Thank You**

I've decided that there are *so* many people, divisions, offices, and areas to thank that I will dedicate some space in every communication this semester to mention a group or two and outline

some of the things they have been working on. There is danger in doing this, I know. I'm likely to leave someone out who really deserves mention. And yet, I think it is important that everyone across campus understands what others are contributing to our efforts, even if that work is not immediately visible.

**Sewanee Dining** has played a key role in navigating many of the challenges that come during such an unusual time. Through hard work and innovation, an incredible group of professionals has been able to meet the demands and needs of our College students. While other schools offer only to-go options, Sewanee has just opened another indoor dining hall at Upper Cravens. All of our retail units offer online ordering through an app, and the Tiger Bay Pub is completely devoted to the board plan.

My personal favorite innovation: They have been taking meals directly to students (and others) with weekly pop-up features. (Thanks for the wonderful quesadilla last week!) They also prepare and deliver quarantine and isolation meals to St. Mary's, depending upon daily need. And beginning this weekend they will offer after-hours events at Cravens to help satisfy students' need for society and activity while keeping them in the bubble.

Our many Sewanee Dining staff members have worked tirelessly and selflessly to take care of our community. The management team members have used their particular skills to serve students. Julia Stubblebine at Stirling's had to completely reimagine a student worker system, preparation systems, logistics, and menu to operate a retail food service during a pandemic, while still providing quality products. Chef Caroline Thompson finds new ways to connect with and take care of our students, particularly those with special dietary or other needs. Executive Chef Dana Moss and his team continue to produce cutting-edge fresh food at a time when food delivery systems are struggling. Megan Brady, manager of catering, has used her experience in off-site food service for quarantine deliveries, pop-ups, meal replacements for Athletics, and the management of dining services at Cravens Hall. Associate Director Brent Tate has been steady and driven in making sure that Dining is staffed and ready to serve each and every day. And Operations Manager Paula Hampton provides personal attention to hourly staff to keep up morale and attendance, ensuring that the skills needed are always available.

**Library and Information Technology Services:** Staff in LITS worked incredibly hard to get the campus ready for students to come back and to make sure that students and faculty continuing to study and work remotely had the tools and resources needed for success. Adam Hawkins and Heidi Syler worked tirelessly with Diane Camper, Christina Broyles, and Kerline Lorantin to make sure Brightspace was implemented and faculty were trained in using it. Faculty technology coordinators Dorothy Gates, AC Cowan, Mary Gatta, and Jacob McGhee put in long hours to train faculty in the use of our new classroom technology. Michael Guyear upgraded the wireless network, indoors and out. Computers were readied for the semester by Kelly Andy, Christine Gates, Neal Raulston, and Anthony Nunez. Events both real and virtual are being supported by Michael Ostrowski, Alex Price, and Tim Garner. In the library, Collections management staff including Penny Cowan, Odis Ellison, Pat Dover, and Tammy Smartt are creatively providing electronic resources for students and faculty while the circulation staff—Terri Limbaugh, Jessica Shinn, Amelia Baggenstoss, and Jessica Barber—help with reserves and checkouts and provide general information to students. Mandi Johnson, Matthew Reynolds, and Betsy Grant have kept Archives and Special Collections available to faculty and students as well as collecting community stories and experiences of the pandemic. Everyone in LITS pulled

together to provide the best possible infrastructure, information technology, and traditional library resources to enable this most unusual semester to work as smoothly as possible.

### **From My Perspective**

First a quick FYI: I plan to be out of the office next week. I probably won't be able to completely unplug, but I won't be sending my regular communication. I have found these missives to be a helpful way of organizing my thoughts about what is happening at the University and how I am feeling about it. Thank you for indulging me.

We are in the middle of week five at the College and week four in the School of Theology. Things seem pretty normal, which in and of itself feels weird. This note is short, except for the thank-you's, because we are getting into a rhythm and there's not much news. We'll need to have more information about the spring soon—and as mentioned, that work is underway—but for now things are relatively quiet. Enjoy some relative normalcy if you can!

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost