March 10, 2020 - Campuswide email

Dear Students, Faculty, & Staff:

As expected, developments related to the novel coronavirus are beginning to increase more rapidly, with six confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus here in Kentucky as of today. I am writing to assure you that we are monitoring the situation very closely and are imagining scenarios for how we are able to continue our teaching and learning, whether in-person or virtual, all while focusing most importantly on the health, safety, and well-being of our entire campus community, both here and abroad.

Since the first meeting of our Coronavirus Task Force this past week, smaller teams have been gathering on a regular basis to address a full range of considerations. The coronavirus was also a prime focus of Monday’s faculty meeting, senior staff devoted nearly the entirety of its meeting today to the topic, and a subsequent meeting this morning with Student Health Director Kathy Jones and a smaller senior staff group took place as well.

Part of our work involves monitoring how other colleges and universities across the country – and those very close to home – are responding, as well as trying to understand the unique challenges that may influence their actions. This includes our awareness that Berea College made the decision earlier this afternoon to cease all instructional activity as of this Friday, March 13.

Based on our current assessment, we are not at the point of making plans to close the College’s campus. That said, you have also seen that other institutions are planning to move to online instruction after their spring breaks, with students not returning to campus. Because this is a real possibility for us here at Centre, both CTL and ITS have been laying the groundwork for a move to online instruction, and I know some faculty are already testing the capabilities with their classes.

To keep everyone informed on a regular basis, it will be my plan to send out email updates at least twice weekly, each Monday and Thursday, with additional alerts as necessary. I also remind everyone that we have created a Coronavirus Information Center (available HERE), to which we are adding information frequently. There you will find a link to my message to parents and families sent yesterday (available HERE).

As difficult as it may be, I urge for calm during this difficult time. While good hygiene, common-sense, and a healthy degree of social distancing is important for the foreseeable future, that doesn’t mean we can’t find other ways to express our care, compassion, and kindness for one another. A friendly smile and an encouraging wave can go a long way.

My best,

John – P. Roush