May 1, 2020 - Campuswide email

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

As you know, I am not one to use words like “great” and “perfect” that often, and I might typically be hesitant to heap too much praise on our efforts these last six weeks, since I know there's always more that can be done. However, that said, I do give our entire campus community very high marks for our effort, our creativity and ingenuity, and the heart and grace with which we have worked to adjust to these challenging times and circumstances.

I’ve said before that “community” should not just be seen as a noun, but also a verb. For me, this refers to people working together for a common good, exhibiting kindness and humanity in the process. Here, too, we have excelled.

But there’s more work to be done.

As we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel in terms of the spring semester and remain committed to finish strong – something Susie and I talk about often, it is time to begin looking ahead very intentionally to the fall as well. Everyone should be assured that our scenario planning effort will begin in earnest next week. I am grateful to the people who will help not only lead but also contribute to the 10 subcommittees we have created to provide detailed plans for each operational area of the College based on the possible five scenarios we have identified.

I’ll leave the details to the message attached to this email, our Campus Update #4. I hope you will take the time to read this, our previous updates, and all the information related to our recent work that can be found HERE at the Coronavirus Information Center. These reports are testament to our dedication to protect our programs and people during this crisis, as well as our focus on the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

As always, your questions, comments, and suggestions are welcomed by me, our senior staff, and the members of the COVID-19 Crisis Management Task Force.

Susie and I offer up our very best wishes to each and all on this first day of May!

John – P. Roush
Status Report #4  
COVID-19 Crisis Management Task Force  

May 1, 2020

It is now six weeks since students were sent home on March 15, and less than two weeks before classes in our new remote setting end on May 12. As such, much of the efforts of the College’s senior staff and coronavirus task force are beginning to shift from addressing the broad range of current challenges to looking ahead to the summer and fall.

To this end, and as part of the work of the Long-Term Contingency Committee, 10 subcommittees have been formed (each with six to 10 members) around each area of campus operation (residence life, e.g.) to develop that area’s plan of action under five possible scenarios that may play out this fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. All classes are in-person and on campus for the entire fall 2020 term
2. Hybrid classes (some students on campus, others online)
3. First calendar block online, second block in-person and on campus
4. First calendar block in-person and on campus, second block online
5. All classes are online for the entire fall 2020 term

The four guiding principles that subcommittee members will be asked to commit to in this important work are:

1. Prioritize our people and positive community ethos
2. Protect the rich diversity of our academic programs and liberal arts mission
3. Preserve all elements of the Centre Commitment
4. Propel future strength and greater resilience

More detailed information about the entire process is available here:


At the same time, important campus wide conversations have continued, with two additional Q&A sessions with faculty and staff taking place via Zoom on, respectively, April 30 and May 1. Understandably, questions about budget and finances, overall staffing, recruitment efforts, and plans for fall 2020 dominate the discussions. The staff session included a sign language interpreter.

One question at the faculty forum asked about the sequence of events surrounding the final decision to send students home on March 15, and a detailed timeline appears as the last entry in this week’s campus update.

Finally, a more detailed update on the College’s budget and financial outlook is being prepared and will be sent to the entire campus community early next week.
**Student Support for Remote Learning**

- The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is continuing to support faculty teaching needs with equipment and support, which recently included creating new guides on Moodle quizzes and tests as we approach the end of the semester.
- CTL is also working on planning for summer workshops and faculty development opportunities led by outside experts, as well as Centre faculty and staff, and are building capacity by making some equipment purchases and working with development staff to write grants to support software and faculty development.

**Facilities Management**

- A facilities management team member has continued making masks for use by students, faculty, and staff across campus. Please contact Geri Dawn Sears at ext. 5550 to receive your own mask.
- A limited supply of desktop plexiglass dividers is available to be installed to assure safe and healthy contact by those staff who are still working on campus and have interaction with others. Please call ext. 5550 for any requests.
- A sliding window is in the process of being installed at the Parson’s Wellness Center entrance to aid staff when greeting patients and control social distancing.

**Human Resources and Benefits**

- A Resources & Tips email message was recently circulated on April 23 around the importance of mental health and well-being, how working from home presents its own challenges, and offering guidance on managing a team with members working remotely.
- To help parents navigate all their responsibilities, human resources has provided links to various resources for kids, such as museum tours, Lunch Doodles, activities from Scholastic, and mini-classes from former faculty and staff.

**Student Life**

- Student Health staff are available to help students by appointment. These appointments occur remotely or in person, as appropriate, with infection control measures implemented.
- Staff continue to follow guidance issued primarily by the American College Health Association and CDC, as well as from national, state, and local public health leaders.

**Academic Affairs**

- Seniors are voting this week to elect the two seniors who will each record a speech for this year’s (virtual) honors convocation. As in prior years, all student recipients of awards will be listed in the program.
### Centre Cares Reporting Tool

- In addition to the launch of a version for students, Centre Cares reporting tools for staff and faculty were launched last week. Several responses have been received, and the concerns, questions, and suggestions are provided to the appropriate persons within the administration.
- In upcoming forums or emails, faculty and staff will receive an update on the status of how issues are or may be addressed. Especially appreciated is feedback on what is working well and what is needed. This will be valuable information in planning for next fall. Please be reminded that responses may be sent anonymously.

### Information Technology Services (ITS)

- In terms of information assurance, ITS is seeing an uptick in phishing emails as criminals try to take advantage of everyone working and studying remotely. Many of these are looking for gift card purchases and they spoof Centre emails by choosing a format like andrew.ryan.centre@gmail.com to make it appear that they are legitimate. Anyone having questions about an email’s authenticity, please forward it to helpdesk@centre.edu for review.
- ITS is still updating systems as we prepare for next year, which includes Wednesday’s update to the campus WIFI service. Overall, no negative performance has been seen from the campus and cloud-relates services with which Centre contracts. The majority of limited problems are on the client end and equally divided between system and network issues.
- We are coming into a time when many user passwords are expiring. Now is a good time to change your password so it doesn’t expire over the summer break. Please follow instructions on the ITS Knowledgebase:
  - https://centrenet.centre.edu/ICS/Campus_Resources/Information_Technology_Services/Password_Management.jnz

### Development and Alumni Engagement

- The #StayConnected campaign was launched this week, giving members of the extended Centre College community the chance to participate in a variety of activities to remain engaged with the College and with each other. These include a virtual Flame Run 5K, “Jurassic Park Talks” by emeritus faculty members, “Centre Reads” suggestions from faculty and staff, and the opportunity to provide charitable gifts to the Centre Fund and other funds that help with financial aid, COVID-19 relief, and the ongoing needs of our students, faculty, and staff.
- The Alumni and Family Engagement team is analyzing the results of the recent senior survey related to Commencement that had a response rate of over 80 percent. An email will be going to seniors by the end of the week thanking them for their response and outlining plans for celebrating their graduation on and around May 24, while we continue with planning for an on-campus Commencement ceremony when conditions permit.
The Centrepiece is being mailed this week. Members of the faculty and staff who usually receive it via campus mail should receive this issue at their home address, probably next week, although delivery times may vary.

Timeline of Decision to Send Students Home

The health and safety of the campus community motivated every decision and broad insight was involved at every step to properly assess the situation, which included numerous meetings by senior staff, a large coronavirus task force, the board of trustees, and board leadership, along with strong consideration of important faculty feedback during engaged email conversations beginning Friday evening, March 13, that continued through Saturday until our final course of action was announced Sunday, March 15 at noon.

The timeline includes the following notable events:

- Kentuckians learned of the first positive case of coronavirus in the Commonwealth on Friday, March 6, occurring in Cynthiana in Harrison County; all initial cases were limited to Harrison and Fayette counties
- A single case was reported on Friday, March 6, then 3 more on Saturday, Sunday 2 more, none on Monday, then 2, 0, 3, and 3 by Friday, March 13, for a total of 14
- While we had a high of 9 cases reported on Wednesday, March 18, the daily numbers were small until Sunday, March 22, when exponential growth really started kicking in, with 45 positive cases reported
- On Wednesday, March 11, at his now-regular daily 5 p.m. press briefing, Gov. Andy Beshear recommended that Kentuckians “do what they can to avoid large gatherings and minimize time in groups and public spaces”; given that the situation was just developing, and rapidly so, there was not enough clarity given yet on what was “large” and what time was involved in “minimizing”
- We were strongly considering one direction the middle of that initial week, and then met with the very large Coronavirus Task Force to discuss the current status on Thursday, March 12 at 11:30 a.m. in the Ewen Room
- At this meeting we abandoned any plans to cancel Spring Break and try to push through, finishing the term a week or two early; we also began hearing that public schools would be closed beginning Monday, March 16
- After the meeting, around 3 p.m., President Roush sent out a campus email blast assuring people that while once considered, Spring Break would not be cancelled and that we hoped to have a decision on our plan the following day (Friday, March 12)
- We wanted to discuss all of this with the trustees before making a decision, but the earliest time we could schedule a board call was Friday at 3 p.m.
- Given all available information at the time, and without the benefit of hindsight, our plan at that time was to push through the week of March 16-20, hold Spring Break as scheduled, add another week of break, then begin online instruction Monday, April 6, which the trustees approved
- This announcement was sent out to the campus by President Roush that Friday, March 13 at 4:02 p.m.
As the situation continued to develop rapidly, campus reaction to our plan was being discussed via campus email on the faculty listserv.

In quick response, senior staff and several additional colleagues, who now make up our core task force, along with Henry Snyder, met again on the mornings of Saturday and Sunday, March 14 and 15; while we did not try to pull the full board together again on short notice over the weekend, President Roush did speak with board leadership about the rapidly developing situation and what we thought was a new and better course of action in the interest of health and safety.

We were also just learning of a Centre student who was informed about contact with someone who had tested positive, which occurred a week earlier at a fundraiser in Louisville, where the student was a volunteer; the student immediately began self-isolation.

At the morning meeting on Sunday, March 15, the decision was made to shift course, adjust our sails, and send students home as soon possible, beginning Spring Break a week early, extending it for two full weeks, and beginning online instruction on Monday, March 30.

This message was sent out to the campus by President Roush on Sunday, March 15 at 12:47 p.m.

Students began leaving that afternoon and most were moved out by Tuesday, March 17 at 5 p.m.

Initially, 93 students remained on campus with special or unique circumstances, and this number has since decreased to 89.