June 5, 2020 - Campuswide email

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Summertime is here, and as the old George Gershwin tune suggests, it’s supposed to be a time when “the livin’ is easy.” However, from the continuing challenges presented by COVID-19 to the tragic deaths of Ahmed Aubry and George Floyd, as well as Breonna Taylor here in Kentucky, summer 2020 may be anything but easy.

More than ever, we must be committed to our individual and collective health and safety, as fellow citizens and as a nation, focused on fulfilling the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

While we are busy this summer planning and preparing for the future, you can be assured that we remain dedicated to being a place that stands for justice and equality. The “better angels of our nature” must prevail.

As for our ongoing scenario planning efforts, two main elements are involved in determining our response to the COVID-19 global pandemic: deciding what we will do for the fall semester and understanding what impact the novel coronavirus will have on our budget. It goes without saying, but I’ll repeat it nonetheless, that the difficult challenge in our current situation is that both elements are at the mercy of very fluid conditions not fully under our control. As such, we have so far only been able to discuss contingent solutions to a possible range of outcomes.

Nonetheless, decisions must be made, and the attached report documents some of the preliminary recommendations from our efforts over the last month to plan for the fall and our coming fiscal year. I emphasize the word “preliminary” because these are the beginning of ongoing conversations to do what is best to protect our programs and our people, and not only in the context of the fall but also the College’s longterm future.

I remain grateful for everyone’s patience as we bring due diligence and serious consideration to these issues. We hope to present our plan before the end of June.

As always, if you have questions, please direct them to me, members of the senior staff, or chairs of the scenario planning subcommittees.

My best,

John – P. Roush
With summer here, work at Centre College is now focused around preparing to host the Governor’s Scholars Program (GSP) for five weeks from late June to early August, planning for the fall term, and continuing capital and programmatic projects to strengthen the College’s future.

John Kinkade, associate professor of English and Brown Fellows Program campus coordinator, who also oversees the GSP program for Centre, has been leading the charge to prepare for the arrival of the first cohort of scholars on June 28. Working closely with Wayne King in facilities management, Ann Young in student life, and Kathy Jones in student health, all are following guidelines approved by Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and Dr. Steven Stack, commissioner for the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

Further GSP details are below, along with information about summer programming by the Center for Teaching and Learning and an update from the Norton Center for the Arts.

The ten subcommittees organized around key operational areas of the College recently completed gathering information and drafting reports that were discussed this week at the first of two senior staff mini-retreats. While subcommittees reported out on possible recommendations and identified areas of important focus, the discussions were preliminary and no decisions have yet been made. A deeper conversation, integrating all these elements, will take place next week.

Relevant information from a number of areas can be found below that consider how health and safety are maintained while continuing to offer an exceptional educational experience.

Next week’s report will provide updates on summer projects underway to strengthen our programs and facilities, such as work in Crounse Hall for the new Learning Commons space, renovations to a number of first-year residence halls, the renovations and expansion of Olin Hall, and continued efforts to develop CentreWorks.

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**Governor’s Scholars Program (GSP)**

- Scholars are scheduled to arrive after dinner on Sundays, with most scholars departing around dinner time on Fridays.
- For health and safety reasons, scholars will be housed in single rooms and spread across three residence halls. An initial challenge was how to adequately clean rooms after the departure of scholars on Friday in time for the arrival of the next group on Sunday. Because the limited number of modified summer sports camps will not be staying overnight, multiple residence halls can now be used. For weeks 1, 3, and 5, Centre will use Northside, Acheson/Caldwell, and Cheek/Evans, and for weeks 2 and 4 residence halls in the Old Quad area, still to be determined, will be used.
• GSP has drafted a pre-arrival questionnaire, which is being reviewed by Kathy Jones, director of student health, that would ask those attending to record their temperature and any symptoms for the 14 days prior to their arrival on campus.
• GSP will soon send class lists, from which John Kinkade will make classroom assignments based on strict attention to room density and health and safety.

**Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)**

• The CTL has kicked off its summer programming around technology, experiential learning, and course redesign for online and hybrid environments. Offerings, along with information on non-CTL workshops on diversity and inclusion as well as library resources, can be found here:
  o [https://ctl.centre.edu/programs-services/summer-programming/](https://ctl.centre.edu/programs-services/summer-programming/)
• Of particular urgency this summer is training faculty on course design and teaching tools in hybrid and online environments. We currently have 32 participants in the June session, with an additional 17 participants already signed up for the July session. A central focus of the course will be to think about what was learned from spring 2020, and how incorporating technology for remote learning might not only improve our flexibility but also improve our face-to-face teaching.

**Norton Center for the Arts**

• Based on direction from the College and the CDC, along with state and local guidelines, Norton Center staff are developing plans to reopen the building for programs.
• Additional offerings within the “Great Stories” platform are being developed, to include blog and social media posts and interactive public video calls. The “Great Stories” can be found here:
  o [http://nortoncenter.com/](http://nortoncenter.com/)
• Efforts continue to complete the 2020-2021 Norton Center performance season and to develop single ticket, subscription, and marketing campaigns that reflect our “new normal.”

**Preliminary Information from Scenario Planning Subcommittee Reports, Still Under Review and Discussion, Reflecting Both Summer and Fall Arrangements and Preparations**

**Academic Affairs**

• Among the proposed recommendations, still a part of ongoing conversation, are that the vast majority of Centre courses will be offered in-person and on campus, recognizing that some students and a few faculty members may be unable to return to campus and will continue to work from home.
• To this end, if this is the ultimate direction the College pursues, all faculty members would be asked to prepare to teach their courses in a hybrid model, which serves both face-to-face and virtual learners, and to focus on meeting with all students synchronously
during the scheduled class meeting times. Students in vastly different time zones would be able to access recorded class sessions.

- If social distancing requirements prevent all students from being in a classroom together, a subset of students may, on occasion, have to join a class session virtually, and a small number of classes may be taught entirely online.
- In the interest of health and safety when meeting together in classes and labs, students and faculty will likely need to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times, with cloth face masks being the minimum required PPE.
- Before attending classes or reporting to work, all students, faculty, and staff members would report their daily health status via a custom-designed app, which clears those in good health to attend or report.
- Some few faculty members may wish to prepare for outdoor teaching, and more social gatherings may occur outside as well.

**Athletics**

- Planning is underway to reopen the Buck Fitness Center at some point in the future. Once that date is decided, it will be shared more broadly with the community.
- With the state’s permission to resume outdoor youth sports camps after June 15, Jeb Burch will be conducting a smaller, specialized, day soccer camp later in July. Additional summer camp plans are being vetted for possibilities into July.
- The work of the Athletics COVID-19 Action Team continues to inform the strategic planning process for the resocialization of sport for fall 2020.
- Athletics celebrated a record incoming class of recruited student-athletes with 179 deposits as of June 1. That number is up 21 from the anticipated total and is 50 percent of the incoming class for 2020. Tireless efforts by coaches yielded an extraordinary number in the midst of challenging and uncertain conditions.
- Recruitment efforts are already underway for the fall 2021 class.

**Health and Safety**

- The subcommittee reiterated that compliance with Kentucky’s Healthy at Work plan is imperative, which includes prevention efforts such as six feet of physical distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, hand washing, avoiding gathering in common areas, and extensive cleaning and disinfection.
- An online temperature and symptoms reporting tool being developed with Information Technology Services (ITS) was shared, with plans to pilot this with a few offices in June and July.
- Limited capacities in classrooms and meeting spaces will require innovation, and discussions about possible solutions is ongoing.
- Isolation and quarantine plans were also discussed, including possible spaces designated for this purpose.
- Finally, contact tracing and case management were also identified as necessary components of fall planning.
Pay, Benefits, and Staffing

- The subcommittee has focused much of its work on generating a broad list of possible “levers” or “interventions” the College might consider to prepare for a probable shortfall in revenue and increased expenses for the coming fiscal year, focusing on pay, benefits, and staffing expenses.
- Time was also spent gathering insight on these different options from other institutions and subject matter experts to learn what they are doing and advising to respond to this higher education crisis.
- For all options generated, the subcommittee discussed the likely impact of each option in terms of cultural health, financial outcomes, and institutional risk. There was a general consensus to group the possible options by potential impact as we balance the need to prioritize our people and positive community ethos and the uncertain financial challenges the College faces.
- The preliminary recommendation, which will be discussed thoroughly, is that the College’s measured response be rolled out in “waves” or “phases” using different options over time as required and as suggested by financial circumstances. This phased approach would be an attempt to balance the College’s need for agility to counter the pandemic’s impact, all while trying to not react too severely, too soon.

Residence Life and Student Engagement

- At every turn, our subcommittee’s guiding light has been to consider the health and safety of all members of the Centre community.
- We would remind all members of the community that we each have a responsibility to our own health and the health of each other, and we must commit to following all recommendations and guidelines for our shared desire to be able to live and learn together on campus.
- Approximately 20 isolation locations have been identified and held out of room draw in case they are needed for this coming fall term.
- Working with the Health and Safety Subcommittee, along with Facilities Management, and following guidelines from the CDC and our local Boyle County Health Department, the subcommittee is developing cleaning protocols for residence hall common spaces (lobbies, kitchens, bathrooms, etc.).
- For further discussion and review, all housing options have been considered for each of the five possible scenarios—from full residency on campus, to reduced density or housing only those who cannot return home in the event of another campus shutdown.
- Orientation event planning for the start the year, as well as planning for those events and activities “outside the classroom,” are being reviewed to accommodate social distancing guidelines and protocols that keep all members of the community safe and healthy.
- A campus dining plan has also been recommended for discussion that considers social distancing guidelines and protocols and the campus academic class schedule. Three serveries would provide varied food options at lunch, with the regular servery space accommodating handling breakfast and dinner (with the possibility of utilizing a second
servery for dinner, yet to be determined). All meals would be served (no self-service), and all staff would be trained on how to best serve and protect the campus community.

**Study Abroad**

- **As of this week,** the Center for Global Citizenship (CGC) has cancelled or postponed six of our 12 fall 2020 study abroad programs. These decisions were made based on travel restrictions and discussions with our partners.
- CGC has promised to communicate decisions on the fall 2020 study abroad programs by June 15, and we are in the midst of scheduling those meetings for next week in order to speak with students, share our decision-making process, and field their questions. In these meetings, CGC will also provide detailed information to students on alternatives open if their program is cancelled or postponed.
- Our two major programs in the fall that are directed by Centre faculty (Merida, Mexico and Strasbourg, France) are still being considered as we engage in detailed discussions about health and safety conditions in those locations, plans for quarantine measures, and changes to the program that would maximize student safety. Of course, we will comply with all travel advisories issued by the U.S. State Department and the CDC, as well as the College’s insurer. Thirty-one students are scheduled to study in Merida or Strasbourg in the fall.
- If the fall programs are cancelled, 76 extra students would be on campus, which has ramifications for housing, dining, and classes that are being reviewed.
- As a reminder, and has been communicated all along, all students should have registered for fall 2020 courses on campus even if they are scheduled to go abroad.
- Our office is re-working health and liability forms, as well as emergency protocol plans in the context of this new normal with regard to study abroad.