July 17, 2020 - Campuswide email

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Greetings from Danville! We have been extremely busy here at Centre making plans for the fall semester and implementing health and safety measures on campus as we determine a path forward. I hope you have had time to review the recently released policies for fall that were sent out on Wednesday and reside on our redesigned COVID-19 Information Center webpage.

In an attempt to get to know each other better and introduce myself to you while we are apart, I recently recorded a short video that highlights a few of our current plans and hopes for the fall. If you have a chance to watch it, you can link to it here: Healthy@Centre Plans for Fall 2020.

Your comments and questions about our plans and policies have been extremely helpful as we continue to refine them and complete work on additional items that we will roll out in the coming days and weeks. In fact, I would emphasize that your input has been essential to our success. We encourage you to continue to send us your questions and comments.

Just yesterday, several college administrators and I met with student leaders for nearly 90 minutes to discuss ideas about the fall semester. I look forward to two Zoom calls scheduled for next week with first-year and returning students and their families. Ellen Godley, our vice president for academic affairs and Dean of the College, is also meeting with faculty next week to discuss progress on fall planning. Surveys will then be sent separately each to students and faculty to ask for additional information about your fall plans and seek ways we can help as we look ahead to August.

In addition to working with our Board of Trustees, local, regional, state, and national health officials have been essential partners in our efforts. Although there are several positive indicators about the pandemic’s immediate impact in Danville, we are constantly monitoring the health situation here and in the region. If we are able to open in person, as we hope, we will all need to join together to uphold our social contract and strictly follow our new policies that impact all of us.

This means that campus life will be significantly different. For example, we will require daily health self-assessments and employ a significant virus testing program for all students, faculty, and staff; our social contract will be enforced; we will all be wearing masks and practicing social distancing on campus (which means no large group parties or gatherings); we will accommodate high-risk individuals and enforce travel restrictions; and there will be major limitations to outside visitors and campus access. As noted in my message last night from our athletic conference (SAA), the fall semester, like last spring, will also unfortunately not be
normal for our student-athletes.

Above all, we must prioritize the health and safety of the Centre and Danville communities, even as we make every effort to preserve our exceptional in-person learning experience and the many important aspects of our residential and co-curricular experience.

Because the past seven months have made clear that the winds of the pandemic can shift rapidly in different parts of our region and throughout the world, our continued scenario planning at Centre is now focused on understanding how our sails may need to be adjusted, perhaps even drastically so, if strong gusts come our way before or during the fall semester. Recognizing that there is no zero-risk fall scenario, Centre is committing significant resources to developing an appropriate, ever-evolving, and responsible plan for our community.

While attention to our collective physical and mental well-being underlie all possible scenarios, a singular factor will make them more likely to work: we must constantly and persistently work to keep each other safe. As we continue planning, thank you for caring about each other. Nothing matters more.

Sincerely,
Milton