Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Having reached the end of July, we are moving closer and closer to reopening our campus for students who decide to move to campus based on the directives we have stated and your own personal decision factors.

Every waking minute at Centre is now being spent preparing the campus with health and safety measures, and we continue to develop our Healthy@Centre policies. Your feedback, questions, and comments submitted through our recently added FAQ on the COVID-19 Information Center, to which we add new content on an almost daily basis, have been integral to our preparations. Please be patient as we review each and every question you submit. We also enjoy seeing many of you virtually through our Zoom Forums, which will continue throughout August.

We remain convinced that a maximum flexibility approach to a hybrid fall semester is best, leaving the decision to our students and faculty on an individual basis about what approach to teaching and learning is preferred, whether in-person or remote or some combination of both. Conversations with staff are underway as well about how they will approach their work this fall.

Let me be clear that the institutional decision to be open this fall is driven both by our mission as a residential liberal arts college and by our understanding of leading indicators about the current level of health and safety here in Danville, in Boyle County and adjacent communities, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a whole. We also know that the successful return to campus is based on the premise that every student who lives at Centre this fall will agree to follow the social contract.

At the senior administrative level, we have been closely monitoring key data points ever since the first reported case on March 6. This includes analytics from the leading sources such as the CDC COVID Tracker, Harvard, and Johns Hopkins sites, to the Kentucky Department for Public Health and our local Boyle County Health Department. Just as our analysis of prevailing data informed our decision to plan for opening campus this fall, this data will be what informs any decision to return to remote learning, should conditions worsen.

Because we have empowered each of you to decide what is best for you, aware that this remains a fluid situation, we are creating a dashboard for your own use that visualizes some of
this data. We plan to launch this dashboard as part of the weekly update next week. In addition, we will provide a broader list of our key decision triggers beyond the dashboard that we monitor. These include prevalence and containment metrics, along with a sensitivity to both community and campus considerations. And, you will see more additions to our FAQ and policy sections of the COVID-19 Information Center, including what to expect on campus when members of our community test positive for the virus.

Reviewing our testing protocol is the other key focus of our efforts at this time as well, about which more information will soon be available. As you have likely noticed, we are increasing our capacity to test more students on a regular basis. We expect to use consistent testing, in keeping with the recommendations of our scientists and health advisors, as one containment method.

Regardless of whether students are returning to campus in August or not, this is an important time for you to be especially vigilant in practicing all the key health and safety recommendations involving masking, social distancing, and handwashing. For those of you in particular who are planning to come back to Centre in August, it is vital that you begin making plans for being tested in advance of your return, and that you follow all the health and safety policies before you return.

Finally, please remind yourself continually that we are all, as a campus community, in this together. As the motto of the Commonwealth of Kentucky suggests, united we stand and divided we fall. Now more than ever, our commitment to one another is essential.

Sincerely,
Milton