Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

As the countdown begins in earnest to August 26 and the first day of the fall semester, I want to focus this week on three important items: an update on our testing and return to campus plans, information about the launch of our new dashboard, and my gratitude for the Herculean efforts undertaken by our faculty over the summer to prepare for a meaningful academic experience this fall.

First, I hope that by now you have all seen our full COVID-19 testing policy located [HERE](#). All students, faculty, and staff who are returning to campus must follow the policy, which includes taking immediate action. I’m listing below a few of the key components that will require your attention:

- Students must be tested and receive the test results for COVID-19 in the two week window before your arrival at Centre. Either PCR or the rapid antigen tests are acceptable for this purpose, not the antibody test.
- Upload your test results to the COVID-19, Requirements and Resources Moodle course prior to coming to Centre. Do not come to Centre if your test is positive. Call the Student Health Office to report a positive test.
- Testing will take place on move-in days for all students moving into residence halls. Stations for COVID-19 testing will be located where you pick up your keys. All students will be quarantined upon arrival until their on-campus test results are received.
- Every week 25 percent of our campus population will be tested for COVID-19, which means everyone will be tested at least monthly.
- All students on campus will complete the Daily COVID Pass every day. You will need to take your temperature every day since you will need to report whether you have any symptoms of COVID-19 and whether your temperature is over 100.4 F.
- Students who have not completed the Daily COVID Pass will not be allowed to leave their residence hall.

This testing policy, along with our strict [Social Contract regulations](#), necessitate serious behavioral changes at Centre during the pandemic. I have no doubt that this will be hard for many of us, including students who will find the campus to be less hospitable and accessible, with many new rules and regulations. Although we are working hard to ensure students will have mental health support and social activities adapted to our current realities, the fall
semester will be unlike any other. Some of you might think that the necessary rules and penalties are too serious. But please consider that our ability to resume and sustain an on-campus learning environment requires that we all agree to protect the health of all of our community members. Your cooperation is vital; this is a shared responsibility that demands that we care for one another more than we value our own sense of personal freedom. Now, more than ever, we must practice care for others that demands we think about the health and well-being of our community.

Second, as mentioned last week, we are aware that despite our best intentions to be open for in-person classes utilizing our max flex approach to a hybrid learning environment, external factors are completely outside of our control. We are constantly monitoring issues of health and safety at the local, state, regional, and national levels, attentive to prevalence and containment factors. A newly launched dashboard (available [HERE](#)) has been added to our COVID-19 Information Center that provides real-time data about case counts, positivity rates, and a range of additional indicators. The dashboard is interactive, so you can toggle between various geographic areas. Below the dashboard itself, please note the many data sources populating the dashboard. We invite you to use the dashboard as you make decisions about your health and safety this fall.

The information available on this dashboard, along with our the ongoing consultations with professional health advisors and other relevant information, will be used to determine our ability to continue to offer an on-campus learning environment this fall. If factors point us in the direction of needing to return to a remote setting, I will rely on our senior team, the COVID-19 Crisis Management Task Force, and our Board of Trustees for their counsel to reach the best conclusion.

Third, pivoting to my deep admiration and respect for our faculty, let me say that they have been hard at work this summer to determine how best to maintain our high standards for academic excellence in ways best suited to their particular courses. Faculty President John Wilson interviewed a number of faculty about their plans, and we have posted these videos to YouTube. Individual interviews can be found here: [Eva Cadavid](#) (philosophy), [Laura Chincilla](#) (Spanish), [Amanda Falk](#) (biology), [Jennifer Goff](#) (theater), [John Kinkade](#) (English), [Prayat Poudel](#) (mathematics), [Ravi Radhakrishnan](#) (economics and finance), and [Jamie Shenton](#) (anthropology). Prof. Wilson also spoke with [Robyn Cutright](#) (anthropology), interim director of our Center for Teaching and Learning, about the workshops she led this summer and how fall will be very different than the spring.
Other faculty generously participated in a discussion on a Zoom Forum last night that provided helpful information about how they will be teaching their classes in hybrid, in-person, and remote settings. As you’ll see, our faculty panel included Tom Allen (computer science), Allison Connolly (French), Amy Frederick (art history), Kristen Fulfer (chemistry), Christina Garcia (biology), Rahim Mohamed (international studies), Kerry Paumi (chemistry and pre-med), Shana Sippy (religion), and Lesley Wiglesworth (mathematics). The Zoom Forum with faculty can be found here:

- Zoom Forum on Faculty Approaches to Teaching this Fall
- Q&A Session at the end of the Forum

I hope that all students and their families will be able to join one of the next Zoom sessions scheduled for next week to continue our conversations about policies, guidelines, and expectations for the fall term. A reminder with the Zoom link will come your way early next week, but please mark your calendars for these days and times:

- First-Year Students and their Families, Wednesday, August 12, 6 p.m. (EST)
- Returning Students and their Families, Thursday, August 13, 6 p.m. (EST)

I’ll be recording another video message next week, as will members of our Student Life team, with even more up-to-the-date details about testing protocols, move-in, and more.

In closing, please do not put yourself or others at risk, be safe and healthy, and begin to model strict adherence to mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing. If you are planning to come back to campus, please abide by the testing policy and begin your preparations now to upload your test result in the next two weeks. These measures are our best defense against the spread of COVID-19 on campus and in our communities.

All best wishes for a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Milton