February 19, 2021 – Campuswide email

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

My thanks to everyone for your patience and flexibility in dealing with three winter storms over the last eight days, all while coping with a global pandemic. I am especially grateful to those who perform critical services during these kinds of emergency situations, keeping the campus safe and operating as normal as can be.

This last week was also difficult given the two vandalism and bias incidents that occurred in Grace Doherty Library, which we believe to be the work of the same person. I am heartened that the condemnation of this violence has been clearly stated in all areas of the campus community. After what has just happened, it is clear that we are all even more determined to address hatred and bigotry in whatever blatant or subtle forms they manifest themselves.

My thanks to everyone who participated in the Campus Safety Forum on Wednesday, sponsored by SGA. We agreed that our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion must be foremost among our priorities. Besides discussing the library vandalism, we also shared plans and ideas that will continue to make Centre a place where every student knows they are valued.

These virtual campus wide conversations remain vitally important and necessary while we continue to social distance, and we will plan for additional Zoom forums in early March. I look forward to seeing you then.

And looking ahead to the new month, results from our rigorous testing protocol are very promising, so much so that we are planning to reduce the amount of surveillance testing beginning March 1 if these encouraging numbers hold. This means student testing would be reduced from 100 percent per week to 50 percent, and employee testing from 50 percent to 25 percent. Student-athletes would continue to follow NCAA guidelines.

Related, while only students saw this hopeful news from Kendrick Durham a few days ago, I am pleased to share with everyone that we intend to relax our visitation policies beginning later this afternoon, moving to Phase 3. This will allow students to visit with friends and classmates in their residence hall rooms, respecting posted capacity limits, during visitation hours from 10 a.m. until midnight. Of course, any of this could change quickly if spikes occur, but the recent positive outcomes at the start of the spring semester should be rewarded.
I would close by saying that we all look forward to more opportunities for in-person interaction later this semester, including with our parents and families. I have asked our Health and Safety Committee to make plans for how and when this might occur. I envision this involving not just athletic competition but performances, events, and ceremonies as well. Hopefully, we can find ways to balance necessary health and safety protocols with the plain and simple fact that we miss seeing and interacting with each other.

With any luck, spring will come our way soon, and I look forward to getting tents set up again and seeing activity across our beautiful campus.

Until then, be safe and stay warm.

Sincerely,
Milton