

May 7, 2020

Good morning,

Here's my latest update for the FSU community.

Continuing Crisis. I hope you and your families and loved ones are safe and continue to follow the social-distancing guidelines. If you are finding these changes in living are getting to be tiresome, you are not alone. However, we need to continue to protect our communities and the most vulnerable to this virus. Our website links to several resources to help you cope. Look for "Anxiety Resources from the State of Maryland" toward the bottom of the page at [this link](#). It includes webinars on stress and trauma, information about support services, and podcasts from the Yale Happiness Lab.

Virtual Town Hall. Thank you to the more than 300 of you who made the May 1 virtual town hall a success. I hope the information on budget, summer operations, and planning for the fall semester was helpful. If you missed it, you can view the recording at [this link](#). I will be glad to continue these town halls as they are needed. We will schedule one once we learn more about the budget from the state.

Budget and Enrollment. Speaking of the budget, the system universities are working together under the guidance of the Chancellor and his staff as we look at budget options for next year. One uncertainty is what our allocation from the state will be. The state has provided no date yet as to when we might hear. We don't have answers yet to what actions will be necessary until we understand the gap we need to close for next year.

Another uncertainty is enrollment. Like many schools, we extended our deposit date from May 1 to June 1. And following the national trend, our deposits for first-year students are down 16% for the upcoming year.

Yet the month of April was a good one for FSU in terms of applications; we saw a 4.8% increase, led by nearly 100 new transfer student applications. I have asked Admissions to make these new applications a priority, hoping to convince as many qualified students as possible to place their deposits and commit to us. We are also in the midst of a three-day virtual event for admitted students, with contributions from numerous students, faculty and staff. A virtual Preview Online Orientation Experience will occur this summer.

Summer and Fall operations. We will continue to follow the governor's, health experts' and USM guidance regarding changes in our operations. I anticipate two things. First, when permitted, campus operations on campus will return in a very deliberate and phased manner. There is no timetable out there at this point. Second, we will likely continue the use of face masks and social distancing. I do not see a full return to campus operations until we have plans in place for testing and contact tracing. Those plans will likely be formulated at the state and system levels. Safety for our campus and local community will continue to be a priority.

Caring Bobcats. Please help me in recognizing the efforts of our faculty, staff, and alumni who are helping others in many different ways during this crisis. We have recognized 17 individuals and two groups of Caring Bobcats, and *StateLines* will publish another list on Monday. You can nominate someone and see the previous recognitions at [this link](#).

Student assistance. Messages were sent to students last week about applying for a share of the \$1.9 million that FSU will distribute from the federal CARES act. I encourage any student facing unexpected financial circumstances to apply. Information and an application can be found at [this link](#). There are a wide variety of financial hardships created by the COVID-19 crisis that this fund can cover, but it will not cover tuition. For that, I recommend you file a financial aid appeal if your financial situation has changed since you filed your last FAFSA, using the form at [this link](#). Please also remember that the Student Affairs Crisis Emergency Fund is available for urgent situations. Apply for it at [this link](#).

As we near the end of a spring semester none of us will ever forget, I want to once again thank you for helping keep FSU moving forward. This crisis is taking a toll on us all, and I appreciate the civility and assistance everyone continues to offer. Please continue to take care of yourself, your family and loved ones. We will get through this in time. Stay safe.

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