

July 22, 2020

Dear UD Community,

I appreciate your patience as our community continues to respond to the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications on our planning efforts to return the University of Delaware campus to its normal rhythm of friendly faces, intellectual pursuit and cultural enrichment. For the past several weeks, we have been working to do just that – from innovative refinement of our teaching and learning paradigms to reactivation of research programs to assessment of student academic and non-academic programming and scheduling. Our primary focus has remained on the health and safety of every member of our UD community. I personally want to thank all UD faculty and staff for their united and countless efforts to diligently advance multiple initiatives for academic continuity in the midst of the COVID-19 uncertainty throughout the world. I am also grateful to the UD Board of Trustees, as well as the students, faculty and staff serving on the Fall Planning Task Force Steering Committee for all of their support and guidance in reaching the decisions to take UD forward.

As I shared on June 23, we have been monitoring all developments related to the pandemic. While hoping to return to campus this fall with implementation of a balanced mix of face-to-face and online education, our ability to remain agile with readiness to pivot remains critical as the public health situation evolves. As you may be aware, [new and concerning developments](#) have surfaced pertaining to COVID-19 resurgence at local, national and global levels.

**In the context of these recent developments, and given our commitment to the health and safety of the UD community, we feel it is necessary to shift our plan until conditions improve.**

**The majority of our academic courses in the fall 2020 semester will be delivered online.** Exceptions may be made – with utmost attention to protective measures and safety protocols – for strictly limited areas of study that require face-to-face instruction for academic progress such as nursing practice and certain engineering labs, animal handling courses, phlebotomy practicum experiences and one-to-one music instruction, as well as select courses for members of our international student community and others with very specific needs. On-campus research activities remain limited to those efforts that require access to our facilities, fields and partner sites. We are currently in Phase 2 of [UD's research reactivation plan](#).

This latest development certainly does not reflect how we would like to begin a new academic year, with all Blue Hens back on campus. [To this end, I pledge to you that we will seize the earliest opportunity to fully return to campus as soon as conditions permit in the 2020-21 academic year, but we must do this thoughtfully and responsibly.](#) I am very optimistic that we will emerge stronger than ever by taking decisive measures now to ensure that UD will thrive for years to come. In the meantime, I am sure you all have questions, and I hope the following information will be helpful as we plan next steps together:

#### Academic Planning

- Classes will begin on Tuesday, September 1st. There will be no changes to the academic calendar, other than classes being held on Labor Day this fall, which is Monday, September 7th.
- We will adhere to the original Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Tuesday/Thursday weekly class schedule; classes will be held at our regular daily scheduled times.
- The majority of undergraduate and graduate classes – and all of those offered through our Associate in Arts Program – will be online.
- Select courses that academic departments have designated as requiring an in-person component will go fully online after the Thanksgiving break, with the last day for any class to meet in-person being Friday, November 20th. The Registrar's Office and the academic departments are finalizing the list of courses that will meet in person. Course information will be viewable in [Courses Search](#) on July 29th.
- On August 3rd, the Registrar's Office will notify students that their fall schedules are available for review on [WebReg](#), followed by the beginning of fall open enrollment on August 10th. Student enrollment information will be updated to reflect the most current plan for open enrollment.
- All final exams will be online and are scheduled for Saturday, December 12th, through Friday, December 18th.
- Graduate and undergraduate students who are engaged in research requiring access to campus will continue to have their access to on-campus facilities reviewed and approved by their faculty advisor, department chair, dean and the Vice President for Research, Scholarship and Innovation.

#### Keeping Our Campus Healthy

While in-person activity must be limited to reduce the density on campus of students, faculty, researchers, and staff, the University will continue to advance initiatives for [campus protection and safety](#), equipping and accelerating our return to campus as soon as permissible in coordination with relevant federal, state and public health authorities. This commitment aligns with information about our practices that I shared with you last month:

1. Thorough and frequent cleaning and disinfecting of all campus spaces
2. Testing and tracing as needed to mitigate coronavirus transmission
3. Facilities and campus space modifications for physical distancing
4. Requirements for face covering at all times

#### Health Screenings

UD continues to rely on the latest science and public health guidance to inform our planning and our strategies to help control transmission of the coronavirus. All employees, students and visitors will complete a daily electronic health-screening questionnaire to help ensure the health of the campus community and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Any individual reporting symptoms or close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be advised not to come to campus and to seek medical care and testing.

#### Testing

As part of a comprehensive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Delaware will test students, faculty and staff as they return to campus this fall and thereafter as appropriate in accordance with public health guidance. We are planning on a variety of testing approaches, including commercial testing, as well as in-house testing. COVID-19 testing methodology is rapidly evolving, and the University will base its approach on the accuracy of testing methodology, the time required for obtaining test results, and the expected incidence of positive cases in the population.

#### Contact Tracing

Contact tracing, assisted by web-based modalities and including information captured through the use of the University's internet service, will be implemented in coordination with the Delaware Division of Public Health to identify people who may have come in close contact with COVID-19-positive individuals and can refer those people for testing.

These new approaches will be implemented while balancing and respecting the privacy concerns they understandably raise. UD is identifying residential housing, medical and food services for students who need to be isolated or quarantined when COVID-19-positive cases occur.

#### Student Life: Staying Active and Connected

All Student Life [support services and engagement opportunities](#) will be offered both virtually and in person in alignment with health protocols, and changes to access will always be updated on the [Student Life Virtual Hub](#). All Registered Student Organizations and fraternities and sororities will be supported to operate virtually so all students can participate, regardless of location.

For students who will be invited to reside in on-campus housing, living in the surrounding area or are visiting campus, the UD experience will look and feel different during fall 2020 as we prioritize behavioral expectations for the public health of our entire UD community. Our goal is to have a safe and engaging experience for our residential and off-campus students. All will be asked to adhere to a set of protocols that will include, but are not limited to, wearing face coverings outside personal living spaces, physical distancing, the prohibition of guests in residence halls, daily self-monitoring and reporting, and assisting with contact tracing.

Students will be able to safely enjoy the campus environment and therefore will have a number of facilities, including the Library, Little Bob and our Student Centers, available for their use. Within our Student Centers, the Esports Arena, the Hen Zone and other spaces will be available for student engagement. In-person activities may increase over the course of the semester based on the demonstrated health of the community and evidence of adherence to UD's expectations.

#### Residence Life and Housing

On-campus housing spaces in residence hall rooms, suites and apartments will be **limited primarily to students whose academic program requires on-campus, face-to-face instruction. In addition, students who meet pre-defined criteria, including international students, students in field placements or clinical rotations, and students who require housing due to hardship will also be considered.** All current housing contract holders should consider those contracts deferred until Spring 2021 and will receive an email from Residence Life & Housing within the next 24 hours detailing their options for housing and dining.

For students who will be on campus, Residence Life & Housing staff has developed a plan to significantly reduce the occupancy of the residence halls by converting all bedrooms to single-occupancy along with the planned implementation of numerous precautions to promote the health of our students. Any student who is interested in canceling their housing contract for the entire academic year will have the opportunity to do so without penalty.

#### Tuition, Fees and Scholarships

While the University continues to make significant investments in faculty and in online technology to lead our students to success, tuition for the 2020-21 academic year will remain flat, with no increase from the rate charged for the 2019-20 academic year.

In order to maximize value and maintain momentum for student success, the University is enhancing opportunities for all undergraduate students to complete at least 30 credits per academic year in support of the "Finish in Four" graduation goal. While tuition costs remain the same for 12 or more credits in UD's Fall and Spring semesters, undergraduate students taking 12 credits in the Fall will be able to take up to an additional six credits this academic year during the Winter and/or Summer sessions at no additional tuition charge. In essence, eligible undergraduate students will have access to up to six "free" credits from the fall to apply during the upcoming 2020-21 Winter or Summer sessions to enable great value and individual flexibility for our students. Similarly, additional tuition charge will not be incurred if an undergraduate student takes 15 credits in the Fall and would like to take an additional three credits in the Winter or Summer session.

We understand this is a difficult time for everyone. Access to technology will be key to academic success. Student Financial Services will soon provide details of a process for students who have a demonstrated need to acquire funds for appropriate technology purchases in support of the learning experience for this academic year.

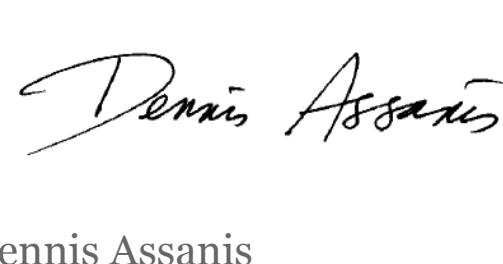
We are currently reviewing student fees, which will be adjusted based on evaluation of services that we can provide both virtually and in person.

#### Our Forward Focus

Our decisions continue to be driven by [three guiding principles](#): (1) Caring for Our People; (2) Cultivating Academic Excellence, and Enrichment and (3) Invigorating Our Mission for Positive Change. These principles not only guide our decisions, but also unite us as a community, and I sincerely hope you will join me in pledging to do your part, keeping yourselves and each other safe and healthy by making the right choices to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. It's important that we all support and look out for one another. In the meantime, more information about Fall 2020 can be found at the [UD Return to Campus website](#).

To all of you, I thank you for your ongoing patience, flexibility and understanding. These decisions are not easy, and given the environment we are all navigating together, I certainly know that receiving new information that alters the course of your own planning is equally challenging. You have chosen to be part of the University of Delaware community because it is an institution like no other – one that is characterized by a dynamic balance of enriching academics along with a culture of inspiration and growth. I understand that not being together right now feels disruptive to that balance, displacing the connected experience we all share on campus. But, be assured, we **will** get there. Today, we reinforce our commitment to education, to staying focused on our goals for personal and academic progress, and to harnessing the strength of our talent and creativity to inspire a safe and healthy return to campus.

Sincerely,



Dennis Assanis  
President

