

Dear Chancellor Girod and Provost Bichelmeyer:

We begin this communication with expressions of sincere gratitude:

- Thank you for giving the University Senate the opportunity to advocate for faculty, staff, and students during this COVID summer.
- Thank you for renewing the university's commitment to shared governance and taking steps to transform that philosophical commitment into lived practice.
- Thank you for leading by sharing in the stress, fear, and frustration of the communities you serve.
- Thank you for the long hours.
- And, most important, thank you for having the integrity to change course when a change of course was needed.

We write today because we are convinced that this is one of those moments. A change of course is needed.

Over the past three months, governance has worked with the university to implement a plan for fall 2020 that could meet three paramount goals—the only goals that truly matter in a university like ours:

- 1) Fulfill our educational and research mission.
- 2) Keep all members of our community—staff, students, and faculty—safe.
- 3) Advance the indispensable values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Despite the meticulous and caring labor that we invested, despite thousands of hours of meeting and planning and designing, it is now evident that the course we charted with great hope and good intentions is misguided. It is not possible to keep our community safe. The risks are too great.

We cannot in good conscience risk one member of the University of Kansas family—faculty, staff, or student. This is the line we refuse to cross. It is our litmus test. And the data shows that we have already failed it.

Accordingly, we urge the administration to delay the start of in-person classes by two weeks (during which period all instruction, except those courses which must meet in-person, would be delivered in remote formats) and put all the university's energy toward expanding more robust plans for a safe and socially distanced academic term.

We realize that there are many community members for whom an open campus is absolutely essential. The administration must take all action to make this possible—*safely*.

We do not envy the difficult tasks ahead of you. We remain committed to supporting every effort to keep our community safe. We unequivocally support maintaining university operations and, specifically, protecting the jobs and well-being of every member of our community. However, we felt it was necessary to register our strong belief that it no longer seems possible to do that while moving forward with starting majority in-person community life and classes this Monday, August 24.

We make ourselves available to discuss this matter at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Sanjay Mishra

President, University Senate

Grant Daily

Vice President, Student Senate

Abby Ehling

President, Staff Senate

Lua Yuille

President, Faculty Senate

cc: Student Senate

Staff Senate

Faculty Senate