

April 13, 2020

**MSU Faculty and Staff:**

I hope you are doing well, staying safe, and continuing to work with students as much as possible. So that we are continuing to communicate to campus, the following are some quick updates:

Operations from April 15-30, 2020:

We will continue to operate as we have for the next period of April 15-30. Should any employee have questions, please discuss these with your supervisor and/or Vice President or direct Presidential report.

Building Access and Library:

We will continue to allow all employees to enter their respective buildings to work in rotations, etc. and to retrieve items to take home.

Beginning today, Monday the 13<sup>th</sup>, we will be slowing down access to our library. Our library staff will continue with their rotations, but should you need any teaching resources, please contact one of the librarians by email or phone and they can work with you on having it at a central drop point at the front of the building at a designated time, or relay it to you electronically.

Face Cloths/Masks:

While wearing face cloths/masks on campus is an individual decision, we are providing the following link for your information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Census:

Please don't forget to complete the Census.

Student Credits/Refunds:

We are beginning to communicate to all our students who will be receiving refunds for their March departure from our residence halls, dining, etc. This is a very long and laborious process of going account to account, so if you get any questions related to them, please let them know we are working on it.

Advance Registration:

Faculty and advisors, please continue to encourage your students to complete Advance Registration for classes – which is going on right now. This is important to us so that we can project how many students we will have this summer and in fall course sections. The early population of courses will help us plan, and to also know what any enrollment increase/decrease we might see in a particular area and adjust as needed.

Compensation and Benefits:

Compensation, health insurance, and normal benefits for all full-time employees will remain in place. If you have a question about how to plug in your time, please talk to your Vice President or direct Presidential report. All full-time employees are being paid as normal.

Part-time employees will continue to be evaluated for our needs, just as we normally would.

Budget Update:

The budget outlook for this current year was trending very stable before our health crisis emerged, and it was even affording us a chance to build in some strategic areas. However, with the unexpected onset of our health issues resulting in having to refund student accounts for housing/dining, etc., we will continue to significantly limit expenses and projects.

Our budget outlook for next academic year does have some degree of uncertainty until we see what course enrollments and housing occupancy may look like. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will likely be asking several individuals to take on new roles and shift around (both faculty and staff), as this is a process we believe we need in order to prioritize the highest needs of the University for this summer and for this next academic year.

#### Tuition and Fees:

While it was not in our original budget planning for next academic year, we will be eliminating any tuition and fee increases for next year so that we are responsive to the economic stress that many of our students may be experiencing. We believe that this is the prudent thing to do, but it will apply additional financial pressure upon us and cause us to make additional adjustments to meet the challenge of freezing it.

#### Forward Looking:

Separate from the health issues at hand, we have a number of milestones that we need to reach as a campus, with the end of the spring semester (May 8) being the first big one. As we complete this spring semester we will be able to move a number of operational items off the board and then turn to summer and fall preparations. We are presently monitoring Advance Registration for summer enrollment, which is predominately all online or by distanced mode.

#### Summer Camps:

A number of our staff have been assessing a variety of summer camps that we usually host. At this point we do not feel confident that we can effectively facilitate any camps from now until June 30. This may be extended until July 31 pending further review in the next week or two.

#### Needs for the Fall Semester and Instructional Training:

As we curtail new hiring across campus, we will likely have a need to make sure we have an adequate amount of faculty and staff to cover courses this fall and other core areas. Our goal will be to try to utilize full-time employees that we currently have to cover courses this fall before we go off-campus for new ones. This will be one of several ways that we maintain operational funds, preserve jobs, and also allow us to operate with some caution under the circumstances. We will be able to assess our course coverage needs somewhat better after Advance Registration is completed in the next week or so. Additionally, we will know SOAR numbers for incoming new students later in June.

With that in mind, and because we may need to be ready to deliver traditional, online, or hybrid courses, we will be asking several staff members to go through some generalized training for teaching in online/hybrid formats, just in case we need to deliver them online. Our Office of Distance Education and Instructional Design will be delivering this training virtually as we get into the summer months.

#### Bright Spot on Retention:

Our retention efforts are working, and many of you across the campus have been very instrumental in our retention increases. We are pleased to relay the following retention performance for students matriculating from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020:

Total Cohort Retention – 89%

Underrepresented Minority Retention – 93.3%

Low Income Student Retention – 89.3%

Each of these represents an extremely high retention rate, and shows our success in this area. This is proof our cumulative efforts are working! We will see what Fall to Fall semester retention is later this year in October. Thank you to everyone for making retention one of our top priorities.

Video:

Thanks to Steven Middleton for filming this video. If you have a moment it can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/401435925>

Please make it a point to reach out and check in on one or several students over the next few days and see how they are doing.

Thank you for what each of you are doing during this time, and for being patient. We have responded well under the challenges since mid-March and I believe we can continue to meet this challenge.