March 19, 2020

Dear UW-River Falls Campus Community:

As the campus strives to keep our employees, students and community safe, we have already sent the message that all employees are encouraged to work remotely and, this afternoon, building access by the public was restricted. It has been reassuring to see the adaptability of all of our colleagues as we transition to telecommuting and using virtual spaces and technology to interact and continue our work. I also want to acknowledge the challenges facing many of our faculty and staff in telecommuting, including those with children who are now home due to the K-12 school closures. For many, I know that this new way of working will not be easy, but I am confident that we are making the best choices for all and that everyone will do their best.

Now, given the latest public health updates, including the identification of the first confirmed case in St. Croix County and the declaration of Minnesota as a state where there is community spread of COVID-19, starting Monday, March 23 until further notice, there will be a limited number of employees authorized to access campus buildings, such as those needing to provide ongoing essential service, including the Chancellor’s Office, Residence Life, Dining and University Police, amongst select others. We are working with division heads to identify those employees, including student employees, and an authorization will be communicated to those employees by noon tomorrow (Friday). If you have materials in your offices that you need to retrieve, please do so by the end of the day on Sunday. Building card access will be allowed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. In order to limit access to campus by faculty and instructors, we are working with them to ensure that they have minimally sufficient technology to enable them to deliver alternative modes of instruction from off campus. If you continue to have technology concerns that inhibit your ability to telecommute, please let your supervisor or division head know by the end of the day on Friday, March 20. As a reminder, for those unable to telecommute, the UW System has developed a new interim COVID-19 Leave policy. Michelle Drost will be sending further information and guidance.

Anyone coming to the UW-River Falls campus should still consider official public health guidance:

• If you have visited or live in an area that has been determined to have widespread community transmission of COVID-19, please do not come to campus. Follow the 14-day recommended self-quarantine and self-monitoring guidance.
• If you do come to campus, you must follow the official guidance regarding social distancing of minimum 6 feet, gatherings of maximum 10 people, frequent handwashing and disinfection of high touch areas, etc.

Finally, I want to thank members of our Emergency Operations Center and everyone involved in responding to this crisis. Their tireless work is helping to inform and communicate decisions like these, which ultimately keep our campus and community to be as safe as possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dean Van Galen, Ph.D.
Chancellor