March 19, 2020

Dear UW-River Falls Falcons:

I am writing to all of you, our students, with a note of support and encouragement during this challenging time. I know that the many changes you are being faced with as you pursue your education at UWRF are not easy. I know that your concerns are not just specific to the unknowns about the coronavirus, but also include worry about the actions the university is taking to keep you and your friends, faculty, instructors, advisers, mentors and our local community safe. Our priority has been to do our best to ensure the safety and health of our campus and broader community. This has been a rapidly evolving situation. We don't have the answer to every question, but we have heard the many questions that students and others are asking.

You may be concerned about the investment you've made in your education and how we will ensure the quality of your academic experience. Please know that we are providing as much support as we are able to the faculty and instructors so that they can maintain the level of academic excellence for which UW-River Falls is known.

Many seniors have asked about graduation this spring, and I can assure you that all departments are developing plans to ensure that graduation requirements can still be met. As to our actual commencement ceremony, there is a team discussing what our best option will be, given Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations to limit large events through May 10. I understand that the commencement ceremony is a special experience for our graduates, family and friends. I believe that the university can provide you with an update about commencement next week.

We know that those who had residence hall contracts and meal plans are wondering about refunds. I would like to reassure you that one of our current priorities is to work with colleagues across our campus and at the University of Wisconsin System to answer those questions. I understand that the impacts of COVID-19 have put financial stress on our students, and we will try to provide you with clarity of housing and meal plan refunds as soon as possible.

We know that some of you may have new financial concerns because of this situation. Please apply to our Emergency Grant/Loan Program if you are in need.

I ask that you continue to use go.uwrf.edu/covid-19 as your primary source of information. The content and FAQs are updated regularly. Continue to email covid19@uwrf.edu with any questions.

UW-River Falls is a special place, and I know that I speak for our faculty and staff when I say: stay strong, stay engaged, stay true to our university’s spirit and values. We Are Falcons.

Sincerely,

Dean Van Galen, Ph.D.
Chancellor