Oct. 5, 2020

Colleagues,

Faculty and instructors will find the content of this email most relevant to them, but it is being shared with all employees for general awareness. As we begin the process this week of returning to face-to-face instruction, I wanted to reiterate my appreciation to all of you for working through the challenges of the past two weeks and also share with you some reminders and updates. The good news is that after a spike in our number of positive cases on campus a couple weeks ago, the positivity rate has dropped significantly. We are cautiously optimistic that the measures we took to slow the spread of COVID-19 were successful. I encourage you to keep a close eye on our campus dashboard for additional trends.

Some important reminders/updates:

1. Please remember that some students may not be able to attend class right away due to mandatory testing if they live in residence halls. By Monday, Oct. 12, we anticipate that all students living on campus will have been tested. Students have been encouraged to communicate with their professors should they end up missing class this week because of this requirement. I ask that you take this into consideration when returning to face-to-face and provide alternative arrangements for those impacted. Students living on campus will continue to be tested a minimum of once every two weeks going forward.

2. Students living in Stratton Hall are being asked to relocate to other residence halls so that we can dedicate an entire building to isolation space for those students that test positive. For many of them the timing of this move coincides with due dates for first major projects and/or midterm exams. Thus, I ask that you be accommodating to them if they request delays in getting this work done. It is anticipated that all students will be moved out of Stratton and relocated into other spaces by the end of this week.

3. If you decide to move your course(s) online, please be sure to inform your department chair as we are continuing to track the number of face-to-face classes on campus in case there is another surge in positive cases. I ask you to inform your department chair if you are providing a fully online option for your course(s) so that we can take that into consideration as well.

4. Similar to last spring, Faculty Senate, at their September 9 meeting, passed a motion allowing students the option of selecting “pass/fail” rather than a letter grade. This requires approval by both their instructor and their adviser. For more details, go here.

If you have questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me. Additional information will be coming forward to department chairs this week on these issues and others related.

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication in continuing to do your best to provide high quality learning experiences for our students.

David