November 13, 2020

Dear campus community,
As most of you are aware, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine addressed the state on Wednesday evening about the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ohio. As I mentioned in my email earlier this week, the state continues to break records of daily new cases, with the upward trend. During the governor’s address, he reconfirmed we are in a state of emergency and urged Ohioans to recommit our individual efforts to stay safe. He reiterated that public gatherings must be limited to 10 people or less.

The College has made the difficult decision to cancel, postpone, or switch to virtual all college-sponsored events larger than the 10-person mandate until further notice. This decision was made to ensure that the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and families remains our top priority. Please note that this decision does not affect our current plans for course instruction during the remainder of 2020. Classes will remain in-person through the conclusion of the 12-week session and will transition to remote instruction for the three-week term. Please note that individual faculty members may choose to go remote for the remainder of the 12-week session.

I think we can all agree that we have had a tremendously successful fall 12-week session. Thank you for your diligence in rising to the challenge and adhering to the safety guidelines we put in place, designed to ensure the safety of our campus community, our family, and our friends. As proof of your diligence, only 2 of the 166 COVID tests conducted by the Ohio National Guard on Tuesday returned positive results. All contact tracing has already been completed for these cases.

We are committed to providing prompt and transparent communication. The following is snapshot of where we are today:

**Fall Term**
Classes for the remainder of the 12-week and 3-week will continue as follows:
November 13-20: Classes remain as they are now unless a faculty member chooses to go remote
November 23-24: Final exams remain as they are now unless a faculty member chooses to go remote
December 2-18: 3-week transitions to remote instruction
December 19: Final exams

**Athletics**
All athletic practices and in-person group activities are cancelled until further notice. Coaches are permitted to meet with team members on an individual or remote basis only. Price Gymnasium, Martin Field House, and Fleming Field House will be closed, except for access to the fitness center and weight rooms. Sign-ups for using these facilities will remain active online, but will limit all spaces to a maximum of 10 users at a time.

**Commencement**
It is with regret that we announce the commencement ceremony scheduled for November 21 is cancelled. Graduates received a separate email regarding this change with additional details.
Campus Events
Effective immediately, all college-sponsored events larger than the 10-person mandate, with the exception of academic classes, are canceled, postponed, or transitioned to a virtual event. Information regarding events can be found on the Events Calendar.

Residence Halls and Support Services
While the campus will remain open during the three-week term, the residence halls will close on Tuesday, November 24 at 9 pm. Only students who have already been approved by the Dean of Students office are permitted to stay on campus during the three-week term. Students who are approved to remain on campus for the three-week term will also be required to stay on campus during the Thanksgiving break.

The College will continue to provide student support services, academic resources, residential accommodations, dining services, and recreation facilities. However, there may be changes made to the delivery and utilization of some of these services. The Bistro will be closed and the dining hall will provide meals using carryout service only during the three-week.

The campus community will continue to be updated via email as more information becomes available. As a reminder, we have established a Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Information page on our website to provide up-to-date information. If you have questions related to the College’s response and plans for COVID-19, please inquire via email at info@hiram.edu.

Spring Term
At this time, it is our intention that students will return to campus as previously planned unless case data trends make it necessary for the state to change those plans. Unless otherwise specified, the spring term will start on Monday, January 18, and classes will be held in face-to-face, blended, or online synchronous and/or asynchronous format beginning Tuesday, January 19. Monday, January 18 is Martin Luther King Day, and we will have special programs in lieu of classes. We are working out the details of testing for January when students return. The Dean of Students Office will send out sign-up information available as soon as possible.

Thanks to all of you for working together to keep our community as healthy as possible. Our close-knit community is an asset we all should be very proud of and I am confident that we will continue to support each other as we work through these challenging circumstances.

I wish you good luck in week 12 and on your finals. Let’s finish Hiram strong!

Liz Okuma, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President & Dean of Students