

Friday Features: Messages from the front-lines

Greetings, all. I'm sorry not to send these earlier in the day, but the days are full and long. So for this Friday, I will try to be more utilitarian and get right to the point. Here is a list of updates, for each of which additional details will follow as planning proceeds:

Return to on-campus work planning:

- Phase 2 and Phase 3 dates for return to work on campus have been announced as July 6 and July 26 respectively, and Lisa Cowart provided many additional details in her email to faculty and staff earlier today. Preparations for readiness in Academic Affairs also continues. Deans are busy on college-specific plans, and many folks are working on adjustments to how we will occupy our office, lab, and instructional spaces when we return. This will include signs (many are up), directional arrows, spacing guidance, room max adjustments, occupancy limitations in elevators, and more.
- The President's Office sent a survey to students to gather data on their plans and concerns in relation to the Fall 2020 return to in-person instruction at Winthrop, so that we can better respond to and address those concerns. The information we gather will inform future planning, communications targeted to their concerns, and technology investments.

Board of Trustees meeting: June 19, 2020

- Senior Leaders are preparing for the June 19 Board of Trustees meeting that will take place on campus. Committee meetings are scheduled for the morning in the classrooms in Owens Hall, and the full board meeting will take place in the afternoon in Richardson Ballroom so that physical distancing can be observed. Please be on the lookout for the specifics next week.
- The Academic Quality Committee will meet at 11:30 a.m. and review our Spring 2020 COVID-19 response planning and Fall 2020 return planning and discuss conferral of emeritus status recommendations. Each Dean will give a short report on activities in their colleges as well.

Budget work:

- Leaders at all levels are working on development for the 2020-2021 fiscal year and finishing off year-end accounting for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. While it takes some time for all budgets to be finalized, we are seeing positive signs toward an overall balanced budget for FY20, largely due to your excellent collaboration as we worked to freeze budgets and hiring processes in Spring 2020. Also, we have had very strong enrollments in Summer Session 2020, with credit hour production 23% ahead in our year-to-date comparisons this week, and already 18% ahead of last year's final credit hour production. We attribute this to our discounted tuition rate and expanded online offerings—giving students much more flexibility to enroll for Winthrop courses from home—and are hopeful that we will meet our target summer school revenues, even while offering a discounted tuition rate.
- For FY21, we are considering a budget model that relies on potential decreases in Fall enrollment, decreases in auxiliary income, and some uncertainties regarding state appropriations.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work:

- Diversity Council has planned Diversity Dialogues: A Discussion on Racism for Tuesday, June 17, at 1 p.m. If you have not read it yet, please look for Dr. Hynd's email that was sent earlier today with more details. Please join us for this important conversation on your questions, concerns, and suggestions for what we do next as a community.
- On that front, there is one other effort I can preview for you. Diversity Council members in partnership with the Center for Professional Excellence are beginning work on implementation of a program to provide training for faculty and staff in key knowledge areas to advance understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in higher education and the other civic settings with which we intersect. Look for more information soon as we start developing the workshops that will be offered through the CPE and provided by Winthrop faculty and staff with expertise in these areas.

Have a great weekend, all.

Adrienne