

Friday Feature: June 26, 2020

### **Greetings all,**

The word of the day is **communication**. We can always improve upon it and do more of it. I saw a steady increase in traffic over the week as I held my Virtual Provost Office Hours, culminating with a lively hour of Q and A today with Vice President for Human Resources, Employee Diversity, and Wellness Lisa Cowart joining in. Lisa and I fielded questions on how we will implement masking requirements and guidance on how we will support widespread compliance; approaches to testing as cases continue to rise in South Carolina; and how we are implementing contact tracing in partnership with DHEC. We also discussed campus production of plexiglass shields, which has slowed due to reduced availability of resources needed to make them. More communications will come out on each of these areas on Monday and via town halls and the website in the coming weeks. All members of Senior Leadership continue to work with Ellen Wilder-Byrd on how best to communicate our return plans as well.

I will continue to host a weekly Virtual Office Hour on Fridays from 9:30 to 10:30, which you can access using this link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

However, on Friday, July 3, offices are closed. So for next week, I will host my office hours from 3 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, July 2.

I would also like to note that I attended the Mayor's Meeting for the City of Rock Hill on Wednesday, June 24. The Presidents of Clinton College and York Tech also spoke, as did Superintendent Cook of the Rock Hill School District. We are all developing plans that will help us be resilient in the face of what is yet to come as we continue to navigate the pandemic. The school district shared that district buildings must develop plans to be at 50% capacity in the Fall, so parents of school-aged children will continue to have to navigate some version of remote learning. Winthrop will remain responsive to the needs of its employees as we all move forward together.

### **Training Opportunities:**

Last week I shared a few training opportunities for staff and faculty. Here is another one that focuses on online course delivery methods that is available free to faculty and staff who may be teaching online in the Fall:

On Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, Innovative Educators is offering **“Teaching Online: Best Practices for Teaching Synchronous and Asynchronous Delivery” as a live webinar from 1:00-2:00 p.m.** To sign up for this webinar, please go to this [link](#). To ensure you are not charged for the webinar, you will need to add the Winthrop coupon code. When selecting a “Webinar-Pricing-Select a Pricing Option from the Dropdown to Register” in the drop-down box, choose “Go2Knowledge members please select this option and enter your coupon at checkout,” and then add the webinar to your cart. At checkout, please enter our Winthrop discount code, **Winthrop17**, on the right side of your screen. You will be required to complete your personal registration information before continuing with the checkout process. Before you completely checkout, make sure that you have a zero balance. A receipt of the webinar will be emailed to you that confirms your registration. A day or two before the webinar, Innovative Educators' will email a link to the live webinar. If you are unable to attend the live session, you will also receive an on-demand link to the recording of the presentation after the presentation.

### **Fall 2020 Academic Calendar:**

The final calendar updates have been approved by Senior Leadership now that the Board has affirmed our decision to close residence halls and shift to comprehensive remote instruction for the weeks of and following Thanksgiving. This required us to cancel Fall Break and add Labor Day back to the calendar as an instructional day with offices open. Our logic for doing so is to minimize student travel to and from campus at these key holiday points. Ending in-person instruction at Thanksgiving likewise avoids having students travel to many points away and then return to campus. As a result of adding three instructional days (Fall Break and Labor Day), we will reduce three instructional days (one the week of Thanksgiving and ending two days earlier in December). As a result of removing Labor Day as a holiday, we have added the day before Thanksgiving as a holiday, so offices will be closed. We also decided to restore Election Day as a non-instructional day, as the calendar originally stipulated, though offices will be open.

As I noted earlier this week, the final calendar for Fall 2020 will be:

### **Fall 2020 Academic Calendar**

August 24 – Convocation/Opening College and Department Meetings

August 25 - First Day of classes

September 7 - Labor Day – classes will be held (plus one instructional day)

October 8 - Interim Grading deadline

November 3 - Election Day – no classes (Offices open)

November 23 – Remote learning day\* for all in-person and hybrid classes.

November 24 – 28 – Thanksgiving Break (Offices closed Wed, Nov. 25) (minus one instructional day)

November 30 – Classes continue online or remote; no in-person classes after Thanksgiving Break.

December 3 – Last day of Classes (Thursday)

December 4 – Study Day (Friday) (minus two instructional days Dec. 5 and 7 to offset Fall Break)

December 5- 11 – Final Exams scheduled by day (except Sunday, Dec. 6)

December 19 – Commencement

\*A remote learning day means that no in-person classes will be held. Online and remote assignments will be offered in lieu of in-person contact hours.

Just a reminder that our online graduate programs follow a slightly different calendar, to which no changes were made.

In closing, I know that we are all experiencing increased anxieties as we see case numbers continue to rise and impact different populations. At the same time, our ability to process the ongoing information streams becomes more and more difficult as we reach our different information saturation points. I am thinking of ways to provide educational opportunities for the campus that would include helpful information on the virus beyond increased case numbers, which taken alone can be quite concerning. As educators, we tell our students how important it is to look at data closely and carefully. The same goes for us. Clear information and communication will help our entire community feel better prepared for whatever is to come.

Have a great weekend,

Adrienne