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Kettering University

1700 University Avenue • Flint, Michigan 48504-6214

Monday, April 20, 2020

To: The Kettering University Community

Subject: Spring and Summer Term Scheduling; Commencement

Summary

Consistent with our commitment to do so by April 20, we now are able to make a number of decisions concerning the operation of the University through the remainder of the spring term as well as into the start of our new academic year. These, along with updated information on our plans for 2020 Commencement, are summarized below and detailed in the text of this letter.

- Virtual delivery of all courses will continue through the remainder of the spring term.
- For employees currently working remotely from home, we will continue this working arrangement through the month of May and then begin a phased return to on-campus work in June; however, employees in roles essential to reopening the University may be asked to return at an earlier time depending upon our operational needs and as government guidelines permit.
- Planning for this return will take place through the month of May. In May, we also may begin to permit a return to work on-campus for approved employees as the situation and government guidelines permit.
- For employees currently working on-campus in support of essential operations, we will continue our current working arrangements, which include social distancing, environmental cleaning, and disinfection procedures.
- Beginning with the summer term and the opening of the 2020-2021 academic year, we intend to return to face-to-face instruction on campus in a manner consistent with prevailing guidelines at that time.
- Thompson Hall will also reopen to students at the beginning of the summer term as previously scheduled. However, for summer term 2020 we will suspend our 1st year student on-campus residency requirement, allowing entering students to elect either to live in Thompson Hall or to commute to campus if they feel more comfortable doing so.
- We are exploring the creation of hybrid courses and laboratory sections with the goal of permitting students to convene in smaller groups when they do come to campus. We may also opt to reduce the number of courses taught during the summer and fall to create a nimbler learning environment in support of this goal.
- We will move our 2020 Commencement ceremony to Saturday, October 10, 2020.
- We have created an emergency fund to provide financial assistance to Kettering University undergraduate and graduate students impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Currently enrolled Kettering students can find details on eligibility and how to apply on my.kettering.edu.

Together as a community we have demonstrated in our response to COVID-19 that in the face of a crisis we act creatively and effectively with flexibility and determination. The times are uncertain, but our dedication to our students is not. Looking forward into our next school year it is certainly possible that we may have to respond to some further disruptions well into the summer and fall of 2020, and if we do, some of the plans outlined in this letter may need to change. But whether they do or not, know:

- We are ready and prepared to respond to any future disruptions, and we can and will pivot between face-to-face and remote instruction if and when necessary to protect the safety and health of our community and minimize the disruption to students.
- We are *very* excited to welcome all new Bulldogs, current students, our faculty, and staff back for the 2020-2021 academic year.

I hope this finds you and yours well.

In an earlier email, I wrote to you that we would communicate on April 20, 2020 our plans for the remainder of the spring 2020 term and for Commencement. We established the April 20 decision date with an eye towards ensuring [1.] that our planning for the remainder of the term was not reactionary but rather driven by appropriate and thoughtful consideration of the situation as it has evolved, and [2.] that our actions prioritize the safety and health of our community while also supporting our students' successful progress to graduation.

We are living through these complex times together, so we do understand the anxiety that everyone feels about the current situation along with how and when we will return to more normal operations. However, there are also many things about which we can be very proud.

I am particularly proud of the magnificent way in which we as a community have reacted to the challenges we have faced. We have made a very successful transition to the virtual delivery of all of our courses and student services for the spring term. Our faculty and staff have been tireless in their efforts and steadfast in their dedication to our students.

We have created new programs, virtual labs, courses, and opportunities for our students, alumni and their families. Our custodial, grounds, maintenance, shipping & receiving, and campus safety teams have provided essential on-campus operations with excellence. We have raised and are distributing emergency funds to our students dealing with financial hardship, and our alumni and families have been generous in their gifts to help make this possible.

We have supported our community in myriad ways, including by donating and creating critically needed supplies to local hospitals, volunteering across the community, and working with Hurley Medical Center and the Mayor of Flint to create a drive through COVID-19 testing facility at Kettering University's Atwood Stadium.

Critical to our success has been the flexibility, support, and patience of our families and students as we have accomplished all of this and more in just a few weeks' time.

Thank you.

We remain committed to returning to on-campus delivery of our classes and services as soon as it is prudent to do so, respecting government guidelines as they evolve, and with the safety and health of the Kettering community always front of mind. We continue to maintain a comprehensive website covering our operations and our response, including a detailed FAQ and external links. You may find it at www.kettering.edu/covid-19. This site is updated daily; but, if after reviewing it, you still have a question, please email it to covid-19@kettering.edu. We also continue to monitor social media and to respond there as appropriate.

We appreciate your understanding as we work rapidly to meet all of the widely varying needs of our community under these conditions. Consistent with our commitment to do so by April 20, we now are able to make a number of decisions concerning the operation of the University in the spring and summer terms.

These, along with updated information on our plans for 2020 Commencement, are detailed below:

Spring Term

- Virtual delivery of all courses will continue through the remainder of the spring term. We will not resume face-to-face delivery on campus on May 4 as originally hoped but will continue to deliver all courses virtually through the end of the term.
- All academic and business operations of the University will continue during this period taking appropriate measures to protect the health of all on our campus and in our community.
- On-campus operations will continue on a limited basis, but most University buildings will remain closed.
- Thompson Hall will remain closed to students through the end of the term. The residence hall will undergo repair and repeated disinfection in preparation for future occupancy.
- Account credits and/or refunds will be issued to impacted students for the loss of access to room and board over the remaining weeks of the term.
- A reduced meal service will be available to our students who for personal reasons needed to remain in our community during the spring term, although service hours will continue to be limited. Meals will be provided to-go only.
- Students will not be permitted on campus prior to the opening of summer term in July, with the exception of the Campus Center for the purposes of accessing the Wellness Center, Campus Safety or our take-out meal service. During this period, all student activity centers, e.g. the SAE Garage, t-Space, etc. will remain closed and no access by students will be permitted. Exceptions to these restrictions must be approved in writing by the President or the Dean of Students.
- Student Support services will continue to be delivered virtually through the remainder of the term.
 - The Student Life Office provides student engagement support through clubs and organizations, Greek Life, Recreation Center, Residence Life, Health and Counseling and the Office of Multicultural Student Initiatives at (810) 762-9871 or studentlife@kettering.edu
 - The Registrar's Office provides remote help for students' registration issues, drop/add requests, and other requests related to student record management. (810) 762-7476 or registrar@kettering.edu
 - The Academic Success Center (ASC) engages students and addresses their needs in advising, ADA accommodation, etc. (810) 762-9775 or academicsuccess@kettering.edu
 - The Office of International Program (OIP) manages international student affairs, travel related requests and issues, study abroad preparation, and international partnership management. (810) 762-9869 or international@kettering.edu
 - The Library provides support to faculty and students in accessing library resources virtually including electronic textbooks. (810) 762-7814 or library@kettering.edu

Phased Return of Employees to Campus in June

- For employees currently working remotely from home, we will continue this working arrangement through the month of May and then begin a phased return to on-campus work in June; however, employees in roles essential to reopening the University may be asked to return at an earlier time depending upon our operational needs and as government guidelines permit.
- Planning for this return will take place through the month of May.
- In May, we also may begin to permit a voluntary return to work on-campus for approved employees as the situation and government guidelines at the time permit.
- Phased reactivation of the Recreation Center and Campus Dining will also occur in May and June consistent with government guidelines at the time.

Academic Year 2020-2021

We are *very* excited to welcome all new Bulldogs, current students, our faculty, and staff back for the 2020-2021 academic year. We anticipate returning to face-to-face, on-campus delivery of instruction with the opening of the summer term in July.

As we do, however, depending upon the circumstances and relevant government guidelines at that time, we may also need to implement prudent social distancing measures in the delivery of our courses and in our labs, facilities, and housing, as well as restrict temporarily some non-academic campus activities or modify how we conduct meetings and orientation activities such as convocation.

- Beginning with the opening of the summer term, we will return to face-to-face instruction on campus in a manner consistent with prevailing guidelines at that time.
- We are evaluating the creation of hybrid courses and laboratory sections in the summer (and possibly fall) term with the goal of permitting students to convene in smaller groups when they come to campus. We may also opt to reduce the number of courses taught or delay laboratory sections within the term to create a nimbler learning environment in support of this goal.
- Thompson Hall will reopen to returning students for move-in as scheduled at the beginning of the term, however, for summer term 2020 only:
 - We will suspend our 1st year student on-campus residency requirement.
 - All entering 1st year students may elect to live in Thompson Hall or to make other arrangements for housing or to commute to campus if they feel more comfortable doing so.

Commencement

Commencement is a culminating and very important recognition of the enormous accomplishments of our graduates. We do believe that significant sectors of the economy will have reopened at the time in late June that Commencement was originally scheduled. However,

as Commencement also represents a large and concentrated public assembly of several thousand people (among whom would inevitably be individuals at higher risk), we now believe that holding the ceremony in June is unlikely to be prudent or permitted.

Under these circumstances, we believe it far better to move the ceremony and its associated events to a later date rather than replace it with a lesser set of experiences closer to the originally scheduled date.

We understand that whatever new date for the ceremony we choose, it will regretfully conflict with the plans of some. Our decision has been informed, however, by surveys on this topic that we have conducted of our graduates and their families.

- We will hold our 2020 Commencement ceremony on Saturday, October 10, 2020.
- Our Honors Banquet will be held the evening before on Friday, October 9, 2020.

The 2019-2020 graduating class is quite large, and many of you have also expressed concerns about the availability of guest tickets to the ceremony. Understandably, our graduates wish to celebrate with all of those who have made their achievements possible, and we wish to make this possible by accommodating as many guests as possible. Given the size of the class, and depending upon demand for tickets, this may ultimately require us to divide the event into two separate ceremonies held at different times on the same date.

- In the near future, we will survey our graduates and their families to assess the demand for guest tickets on this new date. Based upon these results, we will make a decision as to the number of ceremonies we will hold on commencement day.

Kettering Student Emergency Fund

We have created an emergency fund to provide financial assistance to Kettering University undergraduate and graduate students impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Students who are experiencing unanticipated financial hardships related to securing basic needs (e.g. housing, food and academic materials or technology), loss of co-op wages, tuition, and other specific situations may be eligible to receive funding. Currently enrolled Kettering students may find details on eligibility and how to apply on my.kettering.edu.

Thank you to all who are working so hard to ensure the safety of our community and the continuity and integrity of our operations. Please continue to check the University website (<https://www.kettering.edu/covid-19>) regularly for updates. We will continue to communicate with you as the situation evolves and more information becomes available.

Warmest Regards,

Dr. Robert K. McMahan
President and Professor of Physics

