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December 11, 2020: Letter from the President- Covid Update

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December 11, 2020

To: The Kettering University Community
Subject: Winter Term Planning

I hope this finds you and yours well, safe, and healthy.

This letter describes our overall plans for winter term 2021. More details on each item outlined below will be forthcoming from various offices of the University during the next few weeks, so please look for these in your email and on official University social media sites.

Before I begin, I would like to take an opportunity to thank our staff, faculty, and students for their diligence in observing our COVID-19 precautions on campus this year, as well as their flexibility and creativity in the face of the many challenges presented by the pandemic. You have demonstrated through your actions and resolve the best of what it means to be Kettering Built.

We now have a six-month, very successful operating history during the pandemic. We have experience in navigating both its peaks and lulls, and the COVID-19 Response Team and I are very confident that we will be able to operate with similar success through the winter term and beyond. Indeed, this month the tide is even shifting in the fight against the virus more broadly as we are seeing the first distributions of vaccines in our country, which I know is a comfort to all of us.

We are committed to providing our students with a robust on-campus educational experience. This includes not only the face-to-face provision of classes, but also making available to students as many as possible extracurricular opportunities that make a Kettering University education so special. Whether it is in the classrooms, the SAE and AutoDrive garages, a KSG meeting, or the BattleBots studio, bringing people together is part of the Kettering experience — indeed it is even the principal driver of our design of our new Learning Commons, which is now rising in the center of our campus.

Assuming government authorities permit the reopening of our University by our January 11, 2021 start date, we intend to have all students on campus in typical numbers this winter term and to operate as normally as possible. We will operate on an “exceptions model,” that is to say activities and facilities will be assumed open and permitted subject to our ability to maintain safe practices with respect to masks, hygiene, distance, and density — and only closed or canceled in identified situations where doing so is impractical or impossible.

In doing so, however, we will not relax our vigilance or the overall measures we take to ensure the health of our community. We will continue to prohibit gatherings above a specified size, to limit visitors to and travel away from campus, to require the use of face coverings and other protective equipment, to limit building entrance points, to require health self-certification, and to deep clean our facilities, etc. But we will work to open as much of the campus as possible to our students, as well as to support as

many extracurricular activities as possible.

We are committed to managing aggressively and creatively any obstacles or problems that may present themselves, recognizing that we all have roles to play — and responsibilities — to ensure the health of the Kettering community.

In winter, a majority of classes will be offered face-to-face with a hybrid option. A limited number will only be virtual, but the majority will be delivered live, in-person, by a professor. Based on current registrations, greater than 98% of students will have at least one face-to-face course, most will have many more than that. The library and many other functional spaces will again open regularly. We will be honoring the requirement that all first-year students reside on campus, once again bringing Thompson Hall fully to life.

We will continue to protect the most vulnerable members of our community by permitting or requiring them to work remotely. We will test robustly during the term. Those who test positive will be quarantined and tested recurrently. Direct contacts of those who test positive will be asked to self-quarantine for the CDC recommended period, checked regularly for symptoms, and tested as appropriate.

Students will continue to be able to opt to attend classes virtually, but in the absence of specific health exceptions, they will be strongly encouraged to attend all face-to-face lectures available to them and to move back to the classroom. This is important for them and for creating the kind of vibrant classroom exchange from which both they and their classmates (and their professor) benefit.

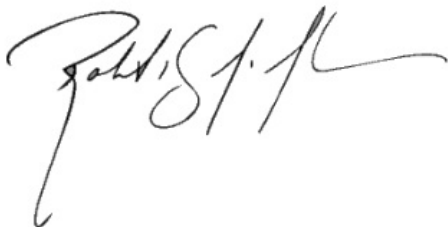
Different for winter term, and because of the dispersal of the campus population over the holidays, all members of the campus community will be pre-tested for infection before classes begin on January 11. This includes all students intending to reside in off-campus or Greek-affiliated housing. More information on this testing requirement including our testing schedule prior to the beginning of the term will be forthcoming in future communications.

We intend to employ every measure we can to manage the challenge that COVID-19 presents us with emphasizing both the safety of the Kettering community, as well as providing the richest possible educational experience for our students. How we responded as a community was the one central factor in our success in protecting all of us at Kettering over the past two terms. Winter term 2021 will present us with a no less challenging set of circumstances, but with your dedication to the safety of your friends, peers, colleagues, and everyone in the Kettering community, I know we will once again be successful.

A-Section, see you on campus in January!

Happy Holidays to you and yours.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robt. K. McMahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Dr. Robert K. McMahan
President and Professor of Physics

