



April 6, 2020

Dear Members of the University Community,

Through these past few weeks, our community has proven that the true strength and constancy of the University is not in bricks and stone but rather in our love of learning and of each other. The ways in which our faculty, staff and students have responded to the necessity of social distancing has been a source of great pride and inspiration for me and for many.

I wish I could say that the hardest days and most difficult challenges are past. Unfortunately, too much remains unknown and each day brings with it new sources of uncertainty. It is in this unprecedented context that the President's Cabinet and I have sought to discern the right course for the University, guided by input from across campus and always by our responsibility to the mission of education entrusted to our mutual care.

Whether it be Commencement or moving to remote education, we have made decisions in stages, tracking the national and regional context while at the same time prudently making decisions when necessary. Similarly, we promised staff in mid-March that we would continue pay and benefits for all through April 14 regardless of campus closure. **Because I know that this looming deadline is the source of understandable anxiety, I want to let you know that I have decided to continue paying all staff through May 31.**

After consulting the Cabinet, I made this decision because of our unbounded respect and concern for all of our employees. **At the same time, I must be honest with you.**

We were fortunate when this crisis began to be in a relatively strong financial position, an outgrowth of your collective good work. While we will seek federal financial support, no amount can replace the impact of this situation, and the future remains uncertain for all of higher education. **As stewards of the University, we must prepare through the remaining weeks of the spring semester for many possibilities – all challenging and some painful.**

These preparations will demand flexibility, imagination and determination from every area of campus and will include:

- limiting expenditures to only the most necessary items;
- deferring capital improvements except to address health or safety issues;
- continuing to manage the transition of employees wherever possible to remote work either within their original division or, if necessary, in other divisions;
- leveraging the necessity of virtual operations to make our work processes as efficient as possible; and
- constantly assessing the impact of this situation, especially into the future, and adjusting our response as warranted.

Above all, we must do all that we can together to provide distinctive education and service to our students and families, especially to those students completing their degrees.

Acknowledging the daunting work ahead, I nevertheless hope that our decision to continue staff salary and benefits through May 31 can bring some measure of peace, especially as we mark the beginning of Holy Week. Accordingly, I want to end with a prayer from St. Ignatius for hope and healing through broken times:

O Christ Jesus,
When all is darkness
And we feel our weakness and helplessness,
Give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
In Your protecting love
And strengthening power
So that nothing may frighten or worry us,
For, living close to You,
We shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.

May God bless and keep you and may God bless The University of Scranton.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.
President