



June 16, 2020

Dear Members of the University Community,

Over the past several weeks, the Fall Planning Group, chaired by Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D., Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, has identified various options for the President's Cabinet and I to consider for the Fall Semester. Among the early ideas that emerged from this group was a proposal to change the calendar for campus-based classes in the fall.

Dr. Gingerich and other members of Cabinet have consulted extensively with the Faculty, Staff and Student senates, and with key offices and departments across campus about the pros and cons of changing our calendar. From this consultation, strong support has emerged to begin and end the fall semester sooner than we had originally planned. Accordingly, I have approved the following:

- The fall semester will **begin on Monday, August 17** instead of Monday, August 31.
- The fall semester will **end on Wednesday, November 25**, instead of Saturday, December 19.
- In the revised schedule, final exams will **take place on campus from Friday, November 20, through Wednesday, November 25**. The last exam would conclude no later than 3 p.m. on Nov. 25.
- These changes apply only to campus-based classes and programs. **The calendar for online graduate classes and programs will continue as originally planned.**
- A detailed academic calendar will be posted online in the coming days.

The new calendar supports a full, campus-based fall term that concludes before Thanksgiving. While no one can predict whether or when we might experience a serious resurgence of COVID-19, health experts have advised of greater challenges should this take place at the same time as seasonal influenza, which typically begins around December.

The new calendar does require some changes and some sacrifice. In order to complete the mandated semester hours and to limit longer interruptions, we **will** hold classes on Labor Day and the days previously scheduled for Fall Break, October 12 and 13. For University staff, offices will be open on Labor Day and October 12, which were previously scheduled to

be staff holidays. Two days will be added to the staff Christmas holiday, which will begin on Tuesday, Dec. 22, instead of Thursday, Dec. 24, as originally planned.

I wanted to share the critical decision regarding our new starting and ending dates in order to give you as much time as possible to plan.

The President's Cabinet and I are considering a number of other recommendations for the fall semester based on the careful work of the Fall Planning Group. We expect to share our complete plan for the fall by early July. The plan will include more detailed information about move-in procedures for new and returning students and health and safety guidelines for campus. We will also be working closely with faculty to create a schedule of courses that allows for appropriate social distancing precautions in the classroom and ensures that faculty, students and staff are safe and healthy.

The goal of all of our efforts remains the same: to deliver for our students an exceptional Catholic and Jesuit education distinguished by personal care and attention. The revisions to our calendar will support our hope and plan to do so on campus and in person. As with so many issues related to the pandemic, our success will depend on the cooperation, patience and perseverance of our community.

God bless and keep you, and God bless The University of Scranton.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.
President