

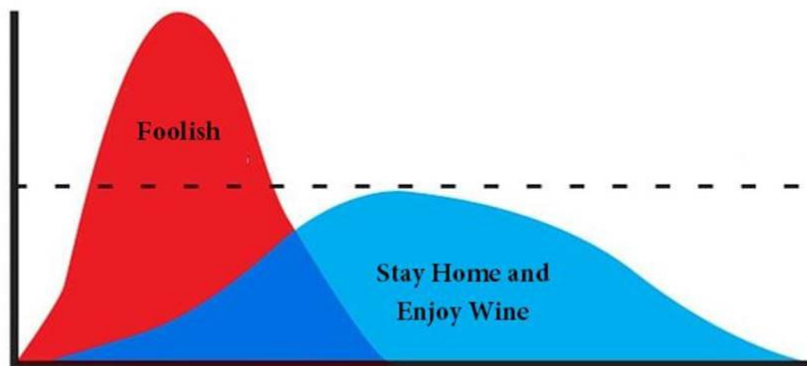
**From:** [Summers, Greg](#)  
**Subject:** Reflecting on the Challenge Ahead  
**Date:** Friday, March 20, 2020 7:43:26 AM

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Colleagues,

As our first week of extended spring break comes to an end, I'm writing less with a formal update than a personal message with two requests. In the days and weeks ahead, we are sure to experience mounting levels of anxiety. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 will increase, the headlines about its health-related and economic impacts will be somber, and the disruptions in each of our lives will grow more significant.

As we work to ensure the "continuity" of our university, it's important that we take a moment to reflect on just how abnormal these circumstances are, and how frightening. I urge you to make time this weekend to take care of yourselves and those you love. For me, that means spending time with my wife walking our dogs, reassuring my own college-aged kids whose dreams have been delayed, and calling my mother who lives several states away in an assisted living facility that is quarantined and refusing visitors. We're all human. It's vital that we give our anxieties their due, that we cry when it helps, swear out loud if that's preferable, and laugh when we can. On the latter point, so far this picture is my favorite:



Acknowledging our fears in whatever form can also help to steel our resolve, and this leads to my second request. Like most universities, UW-Stevens Point occupies a special place in our communities. We are a source of information, learning, and truth; we are a treasured cultural asset; and perhaps most important today, we are an institution that leads. Whatever is happening across the country or around the world, you are each doing remarkable work to manage what we can control locally. Your efforts are making a difference for everyone who depends on us.

Especially for those of you teaching courses, if you haven't done so already, please take a moment by early next week to reach out to your students. Reassure them that a revised syllabus is coming, that you'll be flexible regarding assignments, and that we'll work together to ensure they complete their courses. Remember that students are looking to us because their educations are now a tangible bridge to all the hopeful things in their lives that will surely come once this crisis passes. And we know that it will pass. We're drafting a similar message regarding academic support services and other details. I'm certain that students will be grateful for your leadership.

Thanks so much for everything you are doing. We have been receiving and answering lots of questions throughout the week, and we will continue to provide new information as the situation evolves. Stay tuned to the university's [coronavirus website](#) for updates.

Take good care,  
Greg

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(This message is being sent to all faculty and staff.)