

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
Subject: Academic Affairs Update, 05-15-20
Date: Friday, May 15, 2020 2:00:59 PM

Colleagues,

Next Wednesday, May 20 at 12:00 p.m., the chancellor will be holding another [virtual town hall](#). One subject will be an update on fall planning, and I'm writing today to provide a preview. Spoiler alert: there are no easy answers.

Our planning groups have identified six broad areas we must address to restore any level of in-person teaching and learning at UW-Stevens Point.

1. We must have the ability to regularly test our students, faculty, and staff members for COVID-19 so that we can identify and help trace potential outbreaks in a timely fashion.
2. We must recognize that since not everyone will be able to participate in in-person activities (both instructional and non-instructional), we will have to enable their participation in different ways.
3. We must prepare to offer in person and online learning simultaneously. When we teach in person, we must decide which face-to-face experiences should be prioritized and how these experiences should be modified to limit the risk of spreading the virus.
4. We must maintain appropriate social distancing outside the classroom, especially in our residential, dining, and recreational facilities. Most normal campus activities and events will need to be significantly modified, cancelled, or shifted to another format.
5. We must consider how best to influence the interactions of our student populations with our off-campus communities, since these interactions not only pose risks for bringing the virus into UW-Stevens Point, but also for the university becoming a significant source of transmission outward into our communities. At the same time, we must recognize our limitations on this front.
6. We must safely contain likely outbreaks of COVID-19 among our students, faculty, and staff members, which requires updating plans for separating and isolating individuals who test positive or become ill.

If these issues weren't complicated enough, underlying each is a thornier ethical dilemma that mirrors our national debates. On the one hand, we are impelled to do all we can to restore our normal operation, both because it's our deepest preference and because there is so much financially at stake for the institution and for each of our livelihoods. On the other hand, every step we take toward normalcy increases the risks we run for the health of our campus and local communities. The virus will not care about our revenues or budget shortfalls.

I'll wager that this is not the kind of high-stakes decision that any of us signed up for. And yet, here we are. As I said, there are no easy answers. However, the only way out is through.

Please know that there are dozens of smart, creative, and thoughtful colleagues working to help us chart a path. Their initial recommendations are due next week, and we will turn them to finalizing a plan to be released in early to mid-summer.

I encourage you all to continue sharing your thoughts and ideas with members of our workgroups or with me. I will continue to keep you updated.

Have a great weekend, everyone.

Greg

~~~~~

Greg Summers

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | [UW-Stevens Point](#)

202D Old Main | 2100 Main Street | Stevens Point, WI 54481

Phone: (715) 346-4686 | [gsummers@uwsp.edu](mailto:gsummers@uwsp.edu)



*(This message is being sent to the Academic Affairs Faculty/Staff list.)*