

Weekly Update 5/8/2020

Of course, the big news of the past week was the announcement that we are planning for in-person instruction and on-campus residency this fall. A great deal of work in planning will be taking place over the summer, and the College will be working closely with public health experts and our medical community to ensure that we create the best possible environment for a successful return to campus. We also want to take this opportunity to thank the St. Luke's COVID Planning Team, and the work of Jeff Taylor, for collaborating with the College and the Board of Trustees to determine next steps in regards to health protocols and policies that will assist in maintaining campus health and safety. As part of the planning process, five task forces have been created and include representation from faculty, staff, students, Board members, and community experts.

Like nearly every business in the country, we have taken a financial hit from the COVID-19 pandemic. We did not qualify for the Paycheck Protection Program. However, we did receive support for our students through the CARES Act and the Department of Education, which helps. We went into this from our strongest position in recent years and Fall enrollment will be the key for us. We were tracking with last year's record enrollment class prior to the pandemic, but numbers have since fallen. Deposits are due June 1, a month later than usual, so the next few weeks are important for us. If you know of anyone still deciding, please let us know and we will follow up.

Our students have continued to inspire us with their resilience and perspective throughout this challenging time. The 184 students on campus have done remarkably well and have remained healthy. Here is what one of our students, sophomore Christian Garcia, had to say in reflecting on the past few months. "COVID-19 caught all of us off-guard, but it is during these times that I am the most grateful to be part of this community. After four years of not seeing my family in Venezuela, given the political-economic situation of the country, I had planned to visit them this summer. A plan that had to be canceled given the circumstances. I had many questions raised by the uncertainty of the situation, but those were answered by the College's response and support. The College's response makes me feel like the administration really cares about us. Often times people forget to appreciate the value of having something to eat or just a place to sleep. I have talked to many of my friends in other places about how their colleges have helped them during this time, and the support we are receiving here at the C of I has no point of comparison. This makes me proud of being part of this community and makes me confident and hopeful about the future."

Thanks to those of you who participated in our care packages program. If you missed out, we will have several more opportunities as these students will be here all summer. Speaking of summer, our students living on campus will be working on campus as a way to support their room and board cost. We are in the beginning stages of coordinating a Summer Work Program with more info in the coming weeks.

We have several ways you can help the College, if you are able. We realize there are many needs out there and many people have been hit by this situation. We would be grateful for your support on the College's Give Day, which is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19th.

Stay safe and Go Yotes!

Doug and Jim