



Dear Loras College Campus Community,

Unfortunately, the continued forecasts suggest the pandemic in the US is still a few weeks away from cresting. Loras' Health/Emergency Response and Administrative Teams met again on Friday. Based on our discussion and in consultation with numerous external colleagues/associations, we reached the following decisions:

On-Line Learning

Faculty will continue to deliver on-line courses for the remainder of the semester. I am grateful to our faculty and students for making this transition even as it can be challenging for some. Our Information Technology and Instructional Learning colleagues are working hard to provide support for all of you. In the days ahead, an e-mail will be sent by our Information Technology team offering updates, resources and contact information.

Residential Living and Campus Dining

All residential and campus dining facilities are in the process of being cleaned. We will then lock down these facilities for at least the rest of the semester. Twenty-four students who have extenuating circumstances remain living in one of our residential facilities and are receiving meals through a "grab and go" service.

Room & Board Charges

As previously communicated, Loras will be issuing pro-rated refunds/credits to students who were in campus owned housing and/or on a meal plan. Information will be sent to these respective students shortly after Easter weekend. Refunds will be sent or credits applied in May (coinciding with the end of semester). This approach and timeline are consistent with most other colleges and universities.

Commencement

The Class of 2020 Commencement will be postponed. This afternoon, Dr. Art Sunleaf, Ms. Kim Walsh, and I had a conversation with Senior Class Coordinator, RaeAnn Klimesh, and Student Body President, Madi Abele, about potential dates and approaches to appropriately celebrate a great class that has already endured missing many special moments due to the pandemic. While there are numerous and some unknown factors to consider, Madi and RaeAnn will be sending information to seniors eliciting input in the near future.

In the meantime, Loras will still process and send official diplomas to graduating seniors after the semester is finished, grades are submitted, and degree verification is completed.

Faculty and Staff

I have extended the work remote timeline for all but "essential" employees until at least April 30. Unless it is absolutely necessary, I urge all of us to refrain from returning to campus. In part, I want us to be respectful of and considerate to the work our essential colleagues are doing, especially our custodial and physical plant staffs. Further, it is important that we all heed the advice from health care experts to "stay home."

Beyond Decisions: Important Information

Academic Affairs

Academic Administration and Faculty Leadership are in discussion regarding the potential modification of Loras' Pass/Fail grading policy. Information pertaining to potential new guidelines given the decision to finish the semester through on-line delivery will be sent by e-mail in the future.

Staying Engaged With Loras

As previously shared, I encourage you to stay informed by accessing Loras e-mail regularly, reviewing the Loras Website banner "Coronavirus," and subscribing to "Loras Daily." In addition, all of our faculty and staff have created opportunities for students to stay engaged and supported. I offer a few examples below:

Thursdays at the Library
Spiritual Life
Center for Inclusion and Advocacy
Counseling
Writing Center
Duhawk Campus Connection

It's all about Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, E-mail, Loras Website, Tik Tok!

Iowa Update on Coronavirus

As of today, there have been 6,162 negative COVID-19 test results. There are 424 confirmed cases of COVID-19; 21 of which are in Dubuque County.

Conclusion

I wish to again underscore how difficult our worldwide crisis is "playing out" for each and every one of you. I can't begin to imagine the varied implications that this universal challenge places on all of you – personally, spiritually, professionally, financially, psychologically, physically, and emotionally.

Despite the hardship, I hope you'll all join me in prayer for a better, safer, and more just world before long. I hope you'll join me in finding ways to better demonstrate love, forgiveness, gratitude, and faith.

To be clear, my heart breaks in having to send this communication. Further, my heart bleeds red, not purple and gold, for our seniors who have given so much in making Loras extra special. My colleagues, I so wish we could have given you all that we have given the previous 180 graduating classes with the deep affection, love, and support you deserve – in person and at this juncture of your Loras experience. Despite, we will still celebrate you well!

In the end, let us find a way to demonstrate #LorasTogether.

God bless,

James E. Collins '84
President
Loras College