



Dear Colleagues, Students, and Families,

7/14/2020

I hope this note finds you doing well and enjoying this unusual summer in a creative way.

As we are at the mid-way point of summer break, I offer a brief update and some recent decisions.

## Dubuque Area COVID-19 Status

377, 608 Iowans have been tested; 35,502 has positive results (9.4%). The positive cases have been identified as 50% male; 48% female; 2% are pending or unknown. Approximately 49% of the positive cases have impacted the age group of 18 – 40.

In Dubuque County, 15,308 individuals have been tested and 985 were positive (6.4%). Approximately 55% of the positive cases have impacted the age group of 18 – 40.

## Return to Work

We are in the midst of beginning the third of a four phased approach to returning colleagues to work. So far, respect and professionalism are being experienced as we wear masks and personally distance ourselves as the new guidelines suggest.

## External Visitors

We have been intentional about restricting external visitors to campus since March. In recent days, we began welcoming prospective students and their families using an appointment only approach. We have done the same with key vendors.

Going forward, we will be especially restrictive throughout the Fall semester in an effort to keep our campus constituents as safe as possible. While we wish we did not have to do so, we do not believe good options exist.

## Campus Events

Based on the above, Loras will eliminate or postpone all major events that involve hosting external visitors. Unfortunately, this means that there will be no “in person” Family Weekend, Homecoming, or Mysteries of Christmas events, among others, in fall 2020.

To be clear, events like Family Weekend and Homecoming will just be celebrated in brand new ways. The Student Life team is combining Family Weekend with Sibling Weekend and will warmly

welcome everyone to campus in February 2021. Homecoming Weekend is still set for October 9, 10 and 11, but will be celebrated virtually. “Homecoming at Home,” will be our mantra for 2020, and you’ll even have an opportunity to order your very own Homecoming in a box.

[alumni.loras.edu/homecoming](http://alumni.loras.edu/homecoming)

## **Class of 2020 Commencement**

To date, we plan to make one exception to the “rule” noted above. Namely, we plan to host the Baccalaureate Liturgy and Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2020 on October 9. This group has already lost and sacrificed much. We want to honor their successes in person albeit as we invoke best practices (e.g., personal distancing, masks) given the circumstances of the pandemic.

## **In Other News**

### *International Students:*

Comprehensive advocacy for our International students is taking place upon the recent announcement by the federal government to send home any International students who are enrolled on-line for any part of the upcoming semester. My heart was warmed upon receiving a petition of support from over 300 Loras students and recent alumni – collected in less than 24 hours. I provided my signature, on behalf of Loras, along with over 3,000 other college presidents, asking that this decision be overturned. There’s are reason we proclaim, “Duhawks Supporting Duhawks!”

### *Chaplain:*

We are pleased to welcome Fr. Dustin Vu this week as he begins his new duties as Chaplain. Fr. Vu most recently served as Pastor of St. John XXIII in Cedar Rapids and Chaplain at Xavier High School.

### *Honors Director:*

Associate Professor of Theology Dr. Jake Kohlhaas will serve as Director of the Honors Program beginning in Fall 2020. Dr. Kohlhaas has served as a member of the Honors Committee since 2016 and has mentored numerous students as they have worked to advance their Honors projects. As an accomplished scholar and an excellent instructor, Dr. Kohlhaas is well poised to assume this new role. We extend our gratitude to Professor of English Language and Literature Dr. Erin VanLaningham for the extraordinary work she has done over the past seven years in serving as Honors Program Director.

### *National Historic Registry:*

The Loras College Historic District has been listed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. Loras is one of only two colleges in the state of Iowa to receive such recognition.

### *NCAA Woman of the Year:*

Audrey Miller '19 of the Loras College women's cross country team has been nominated to represent the American Rivers Conference (A-R-C) as its NCAA Woman of the Year nominee.

Miller, most recently received third team CoSIDA Academic All-American honors after graduating with a degree in chemistry this spring. She was a 2016 CoSIDA Academic All-American as well as a two-time NCAA Division III All-American and USTFCCA Scholar All-American. She was the 2016 runner-up at the NCAA Division III Cross Country National Championship and placed 25th as a senior. She holds the program record in 6,000-meter races and is the highest finisher in program history. She has earned four Academic All-Conference honors over the course of her cross country career. In track and field, she is a four-time All-American and holds the 3,000 and 5,000-meter records indoors as well as the 5,000 and 10,000-meter records outdoors.

Outside of athletics, Miller was a student astronomy presenter, a part of the Athletic Director's Council and has presented her research at multiple national conferences. She was the Freshman and Senior Chemistry Award winner and McElroy Graduate Fellowship recipient. The Appleton, Wis. native will attend the University of California-Davis for her Ph. D in Geochemistry/Planetary Sciences.

### *CASE Philanthropy Award:*

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) selected Loras College as a recipient for a 2020 Educational Fundraising Award. As part of the 2020 Circle of Excellence Awards, Loras was cited for Overall Performance among Private Liberal Arts Institutions with Endowments Under \$150 Million.

## **Conclusion**

I'll be back in contact toward the start of August. For now, I hope you and your families are staying healthy and well!

God Bless,

James E. Collins '84  
President  
Loras College