

From: Official ESU Email <esuemail@live.esu.edu>

Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020

To: ESU Students <ESUStudents@live.esu.edu>

Subject: Message to ESU Community from Marcia G. Welsh, Ph.D. - June 5, 2020

Over the past three months, our Warrior family has been faced with unimaginable challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A traditional commencement was not possible, students were sent home and instruction was provided solely online. Now that we've completed this historic spring semester and continue to serve our students with summer classes online, we must look ahead in anticipation of what the "new normal" will look like when we return to campus on Monday, August 31, for the first day of classes in the 2020/2021 academic year. Without any doubt, priorities will be student, employee and community safety and student progress and successful completion of a degree. We are also making contingency plans should a second wave of the pandemic occur.

Here on campus, there are a number of committees fast at work developing plans to bring our students, faculty and staff back safely for the fall 2020 semester in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the PA Department of Health (DOH), the PA Department of Education (PDE) and the PA State System of Higher Education. Two specific campus teams that are guiding our efforts are the Academic Continuity Team (ACT), led by our Provost, Joanne Z. Bruno, J.D., and the Integration and Communication Task Force, led by ESU's Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Nathan Black.

ACT is comprised of faculty, representing APSCUF, UWCC, Senate and Chair's Council, as well as administrative staff and student representation, who continue to work through multiple scenarios to determine the BEST ways to deliver a great education based on information from the PDE and Middle States (our accrediting body). Guiding principles for teaching include maximizing instructional safety by distributing students over the established fall schedule in a mix of delivery options including but not limited to face-to-face, hybrid, flipped, multi-modal, and online classes. PDE is also providing guidance on student teaching and we are reviewing academic guidance from accrediting bodies regarding field and clinical experiences. We also anticipate modification of financial aid rules, both Federal and PHEAA, in order for students to receive funding if we must consider online or hybrid teaching modes.

While we started our summer course offerings with all online instruction, I'm pleased to tell you that we are preparing to pilot several face-to-face summer courses, starting July 20 to help us develop best practices to implement for our fall semester start. Additionally, ESU's Doctorate in Health Science (D.H.Sc.) and Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration (Ed.D.) will resume face-to-face executive model of instruction with dates already planned for the fall. We expect most graduate offerings to continue in the delivery mode established prior to COVID 19, including face-to-face and online. The University will continue to define what the fall semester will look like based on continual updates presented to us by the PDE, DOH, and the State System.

ESU's Integration and Communication Task Force consists of faculty, staff and administrators from every division on campus. This group is charged with developing campus protocols and requirements to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on-campus and plan for the eventual return of students and employees to campus considering all national and state guidelines to ensure the safety of everyone. The group is also tasked with providing critical messages and information to the campus community.

The Task Force is discovering that planning for the fall semester is fluid, and that guidelines and situations change quickly and often. Despite the uncertainties, I want you to know that these groups and the University's leadership team are carefully and strategically moving forward with plans to safely and effectively re-open ESU's campus in August. Our directives will be consistent and compliant with all government agency guidelines and will be based on medical information from the CDC as it becomes available to us. Beyond these teams, there are many additional preparations taking place. We are:

- Collaborating with the medical teams at St. Luke's Hospital and Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono to determine the best means of testing and contact tracing or protocols for campus in the event that reported COVID cases are linked to individuals at ESU who must be quarantined.
- Coordinating efforts to ensure that students, faculty and staff have proper and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Preparing hand sanitizing stations and plastic shielding in key academic areas and offices around campus
- Ensuring appropriate signage is in place to remind everyone of traffic flow and other guidelines
- Preparing our technology for all modes of academic delivery, and,
- Developing enforceable policies and procedures for those who do not adhere to University health and safety requirements associated with COVID.

The on-campus student life experiences (activities, housing and dining) continue to be explored and more specific details will be shared with you as we move closer to move-in days. Right now, we envision move-in day for those living on campus will likely be earlier, and staggered, in order to allow for a safer and distanced flow of traffic through the residence halls. Residents will have the freedom to move about the halls to do laundry, visit with friends and enjoy all of the amenities as long as they adhere to the safety guidelines mentioned earlier (masks and social distancing in particular). Meals may also look different with more grab-and-go or delivery options.

The facilities management team will be working around the clock to ensure that classrooms and shared spaces on campus will be sanitized regularly to mitigate the spread of the virus. Additionally, you'll see plenty of signage that will remind you to remain six feet apart, wear your mask and follow simple traffic patterns in all buildings to support social distancing. Many of these experiences should remind you of what it's been like for you and your family members for the past few months as you've visited the grocery store or pharmacy.

These are all positive steps to modify the way our campus will operate to ensure a safe environment, but we must also rely on everyone within our campus community to do their part. You've all spent several months at home and have already adapted to social distancing, wearing masks, washing your hands and keeping common surfaces clean. Expect those same guidelines to apply when you return to your ESU "family". Everyone's safety and well-being will count on it, whether you're in class, at a meal, relaxing in the residence hall or enjoying your free time in some other way. We'll be enhancing the ESU Code of Conduct to reference student responsibility for safe practices and working with Human Resources regarding the same issues for employees. Each of us must be prepared to embrace

adaptability in ways we've never imagined while maximizing every opportunity to learn and grow from our encounters, no matter how different they may be from what we've imagined.

Lastly, as you make plans to return to ESU this fall, we know that many of you are struggling to stay in school while managing all other facets of your life and that of your family. I want to remind you that there is some funding available to help those continuing students who were enrolled at ESU in Spring 2020 and intend to register for Fall 2020 semester. The U.S. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act has distributed funding and we are following the guidelines established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help. ESU has partnered with the ESU Foundation (ESUF) to identify students in need and to help them obtain applicable funding. To request consideration for these funds, you must visit www.esufoundation.org/esu-emergency-response-form and complete the application for assistance.

We are looking forward to having you back on campus this fall and working through the "new normal" together. These may be difficult and unsettling times, but we are WARRIOR Strong and together, we can do anything we set out to accomplish.

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