

June 8, 2020

Subj: Reopening the University – Message 3

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues:

We live in challenging times. Even as we continue to deal with the coronavirus threat and focus on making our campus community safe for faculty, staff, and students to return in the fall, our nation's long history of racial and social injustice once again confronts us in dramatic ways. The tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of police, like so many others before him, illuminates the long journey yet before us in realizing a nation and world that comports with our commitment to social and economic justice, consonant with Catholic teaching. COVID-19's disproportionate impact on communities of color makes clear that our work for justice must be wide and deep. Notre Dame has an important role to play: providing an education that develops young minds, bodies and spirits and undertaking research that will support a more just, peaceful, and equitable world. This is among the reasons it is more important than ever to continue our work together.

We thank those of you who in recent days have provided input on the plans being developed for the fall semester. Your comments have been very helpful, and we will continue to seek your assistance. We write today to share with you updates on a number of ongoing efforts regarding communications, public health protocols, and policies and decisions that affect our work together. As always, we welcome your input and feedback. This letter is meant for both faculty and staff, and various parts will be more or less relevant for some of you – but we want to provide a full picture to all of you. It is another long letter and is also attached as a searchable pdf.

Communication

We are providing multiple opportunities in multiple formats to receive input and to disseminate information.

(HOT) *Working group on schools and childcare*

We are following developments in decision-making regarding local public schools and childcare facilities closely and will develop contingency plans around different potential outcomes. On Friday, June 5, Governor Holcomb issued his [K-12 guidance](#). In response, we plan to convene a group of faculty and staff to determine how we need to inform our approaches as local school leaders formulate plans for the upcoming school year. That is now at the top of our priority list. We have asked Maura Ryan and Bob McQuade to lead a working group on this topic. If you have thoughts, or would like to participate in some way (serving on the working group, participating in a listening session, etc.), please let us know. We welcome engagement from faculty, graduate students, and staff alike.

New COVID-19 website

As part of our effort to make comprehensive information on the University's response to the coronavirus available, we have redesigned the [Notre Dame COVID-19 website](#). It officially goes live this evening. The site will be updated regularly, and you can rely on it to have the most up to date information. We encourage you to bookmark it on your preferred internet browser.

Feedback via provost@nd.edu or execvp@nd.edu

Please continue to share your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions through the Provost's or Executive Vice President's Office emails. We try to respond to each message individually and in a timely way.

Listening sessions

Since last we wrote, we have met with the President's Faculty Advisory Committee and the Department Chairs Advisory Group. This week, we will begin holding listening sessions with a variety of faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate student groups to gain additional input to help formulate University plans. Additional listening sessions are also planned for staff, including the Staff Advisory Committee. The askHR (574-631-5900) Customer Service Center is available 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, to assist with any questions or feedback related to COVID-19 or any other employment-related matters. All of our plans for reopening campus in the fall are predicated on our ability to do so safely, and we are looking to you as partners in this effort.

The Provost and Provost-Elect are scheduled to meet with department chairs on Friday, June 12. We encourage you to provide feedback or voice concerns to your department chairs in advance of that meeting.

As we receive feedback and guidance, we will identify "trending" topics and establish listening sessions with faculty/staff for broader input throughout the summer. We welcome your suggestions if you are aware of important topics/issues for these listening sessions.

Anonymous feedback

One piece of feedback we received after our [May 29 letter](#) was a request to provide a mechanism for anonymous written feedback. We have built that functionality into the new COVID-19 website and welcome input from anyone through that [communication channel](#).

Reporting/raising concerns

In addition to the mechanisms laid out above, you may report concerns about safety or inappropriate behavior to your respective supervisors. If you do not feel comfortable taking issues directly to your supervisors, or you prefer not to use the anonymous feedback form on the website, the ND Integrity Line is available to anonymously report concerns via telephone (1-800-688-9918).

Health and safety protocols

As we described in the [May 29 letter](#), our fundamental concern and challenge is to protect the health and safety of our faculty, students, and staff as we work to provide the highly personalized education that characterizes the distinctive Notre Dame experience. Here we present additional information on our health and safety protocols. A number of key health and safety protocols have recently been approved and are summarized here. Additional detail can be found on the [COVID-19 website](#).

Health checks

All students, staff, and faculty will be required to complete a mandatory daily health check. The health information provided by community members will only be shared with medical professionals either within University Health Services (students) or the Wellness Center (faculty and staff). University Health Services

or Wellness Center health professionals will evaluate the responses and reach out to community members as warranted for telehealth assessment and possible testing. These protocols will be based on the most up to date medical information. We will monitor compliance with this requirement across relevant groupings (examples might include percent completing in a class, in an organizational unit, in a building, in a residence hall, etc.). We are also developing a broad communications plan to support the cultural habits needed to ensure full compliance. We are in conversation with a software vendor, and anticipate launching the health check system in the next 4-6 weeks.

Face coverings

Guidance from the CDC emphasizes the importance of wearing face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In light of this, Notre Dame has adopted the following policies:

- All students, faculty, and staff in a University campus space will be expected to wear face coverings at all times when they are, or may be, in the presence of other individuals, except when alone in a private room (office, residence hall room) or in a private vehicle.
- Students will be expected to wear face coverings in all common areas of the residence halls, but not within their own room.
- Visitors to campus will be expected to wear face coverings at all times.

Enhanced cleaning protocols

The Building Services team, in addition to their daily cleaning and sanitizing of spaces across campus, will also increase their disinfecting of all frequently touched surfaces throughout campus to multiple times each day. Frequently touched surfaces include items such as door handles, handrails, restroom fixtures, elevator buttons, counter tops, etc.

As part of the University's cleaning and disinfecting plan, the Building Services team will also deploy hand sanitizing stations at the main entrances of all facilities and in high-traffic common areas throughout campus.

The University invites and encourages all students, faculty and staff to be active participants and aid in the disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces to help eliminate the virus that causes COVID-19. In addition to the increased measures being taken by the Building Services team, thousands of pressurized spray bottles containing surface disinfectant will be deployed and available for use by any University community member at any time. These bottles will be clearly marked and placed in every classroom, restroom, conference and meeting room, common areas, chapels, and residence halls throughout campus. This disinfectant can be easily sprayed over surfaces in a mist that dries within minutes and will help kill any germs and virus present.

Everyone is encouraged to help reduce any potential spread of the virus by routinely sanitizing their individual workspaces.

HVAC systems

We had a number of questions raised through the provost's email about how HVAC restart was going to proceed. We consulted with Facilities Design and Operations and learned the following: Prior to occupancy, each facility that has been hibernated will have the air systems operated in a purge mode for at least 48 hours. Additionally, all recirculating air systems will be verified for proper filter fit and, to the extent possible, will be outfitted with [MERV-13 final filters](#) (most campus buildings already meet this MERV rating). Additionally, air systems that have scheduled operation will have a daily pre- and post-occupancy purge. Finally, these systems will maximize fresh air intake within the design limits of the equipment.

Public health protocols for classrooms and other instructional spaces

We have established a number of public health-based protocols that will govern classrooms and other instructional spaces:

- In fixed seat classrooms, students will use only every third seat; in non-fixed seat classrooms, students will be seated in a way that provides each student with 30 square feet of space
- Students will have assigned seats
- Classrooms and other instructional spaces will be arranged to ensure that instructors are a minimum of 6 feet from students
- University operations will arrange classrooms and other instructional spaces to meet the spacing requirements
- We will ask faculty members to stagger the dismissal of classes – asking certain rows to exit, and then the next set of rows, etc. – to ensure students leave classrooms in an orderly manner and maintain safe physical distances while exiting
- Deep cleaning protocols aimed at preventing COVID-19 will be implemented in all instructional spaces

Policies and decisions that affect our work together

Since March, we have closely followed emerging health and medical information about the novel coronavirus, as well as the actions of peer universities in responding to it. Along the way, several committees began considering the types of policies required to address the myriad health and safety issues we would face as we sought to safely reopen the campus for in-person instruction. We have also been consulting regularly with medical professionals within Notre Dame, at the St. Joseph Health Department, and at the Cleveland Clinic. Below we describe policies and decisions that affect our work together.

Faculty and staff policy for additional accommodations related to COVID-19

Because we know the high importance that many of you place on the additional accommodations policy, we provide here the full text of the policy, with hotlinks to relevant websites.

As we reopen campus and resume our central work of teaching and scholarship, the University is committed to taking every reasonable step to create a safe and healthy environment.

Scientific understanding of the COVID-19 virus is evolving rapidly, as are technologies and therapeutics to detect and treat it. However, until a vaccination is discovered or the virus abates, the best medical advice is that each of us must adopt habits and norms designed to prevent us from catching or spreading the virus.

We are implementing a number of public health protocols including expectations regarding wearing face coverings, physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and other hygiene measures. These efforts will be accompanied by an extensive communications campaign and signage across campus.

In addition, the University will be implementing specific changes to make our classrooms and work places as safe as possible. These steps --- all of which are based on medical advice from local and national experts, including a team from the Cleveland Clinic – include, among other things: reconfiguration of classrooms and work spaces and assigned seating in instructional spaces to provide the recommended physical distance; a mandatory daily health check for all community members; an on-site testing facility for anyone with symptoms or who has been in close contact with someone with the virus; a robust contact tracing program to identify those who may need to be tested; isolation and quarantine spaces for on-campus students separate from the residence halls; policies governing movement within buildings; and enhanced and more frequent cleaning of common spaces and high touch areas. We will implement additional health and safety protocols as the science evolves and as we learn from the broader community.

All of these steps are being taken to protect the entire community as we return to the university's core mission of teaching and research. We recognize that individual circumstances, including age and certain underlying health conditions, can increase the risk that, if acquired, the course of the virus can be more severe. **Therefore, in addition to all the protocols and changes already described, we are implementing, for the fall 2020 semester, a streamlined process for responding to individual requests for further accommodations related to COVID-19 based on personal circumstances. We may extend accommodations into the spring 2021 semester, without further requirements, as we learn more about the course of COVID-19.**

Such accommodations could include measures such as: a special configuration of classrooms or work spaces, beyond those already planned; a change in the location or timing of your class or your work schedule; or enabling faculty, instructors, or staff to teach or work remotely. If you believe you may need further accommodation, we urge you to submit a request as soon as possible so we can begin working with you.

To initiate a request for COVID-related further accommodation, go to [this link](#) and click on the "COVID-19 Accommodation Request" tab. There you will find a simple and brief form that asks for information based on the risk factors identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); these include age 65 and older and certain enumerated medical conditions.

- If your request is based on a medical condition, you will be required to submit medical certification, as is always required for accommodations due to health concerns. However, to streamline the process, discussions about the accommodations you are seeking will begin before receipt of medical certification.
- If you wish to request an accommodation for a reason other than age or the underlying health conditions identified by the CDC, including the medical condition of a member of your family, you will have an opportunity to do so on the form.

You will receive a response from the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) within one business day after you submit your form. The OIE team is well versed in handling accommodations and will contact you directly. In a collaborative, interactive process, the OIE team member will discuss with you possible accommodations. We note that this interactive process may allow us to learn things which we will choose to implement across the university, thus benefiting the entire campus community. Depending on the nature of the accommodation under consideration, your department chair, dean, or supervisor may be consulted to determine whether an accommodation would present an undue hardship to the University. At no point in time will your medical information be shared beyond the OIE team. The decision on whether and what accommodations will be approved rests with OIE. Unless you specify otherwise, the accommodations will be communicated by OIE to facilities/operations and your department chair/dean/supervisor as relevant.

As we prepare for the fall semester, we are committed to doing everything reasonable to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy. We will need your cooperation. Again, if you seek a further accommodation due to COVID-related risks, please submit your [request](#) as soon as possible, ideally by June 26, to enable OIE to review your concerns, discuss possible solutions, and render a decision quickly.

Travel policy

Again, because we know the high importance that many of you place on travel, we provide here the full text of the policy.

The University's efforts to minimize COVID-19 infections and safeguard the health of the entire Notre Dame community depend on a package of measures and protocols. One important element of that package is to curtail travel to and from campus as much as possible, in order to lessen the introduction of new sources of infection. This is the primary reason for the significant adjustment to our academic calendar, with the Fall semester now beginning with classes on August 10 and running straight through the completion of final exams by November 24. This is also the reason for this policy, which strictly limits travel during the Fall semester.

Throughout the fall 2020 semester, University-related travel will be strictly limited to essential travel, regardless of whether the university is paying for it. Permission for all University-related travel must be approved by a Dean or a Vice President. Requests for such travel should include an explanation of why the travel is essential, the dates, destinations, transportation plans and lodging involved in the trip, as well as the steps that will be taken to maximize physical distancing and to adhere to CDC guidelines and local health recommendations at the destination.

Approval will be based upon: (1) an assessment of the need for the requested travel during the semester instead of at some later time; (2) the immediate importance of the requested travel to the University's core mission of teaching and research; and (3) the potential long-term consequences to the University of not undertaking the requested travel during the semester. All approved travel must be booked through TravelND or Anthony Travel. The University will not pay for, or reimburse expenses for, University-related travel that does not comply with these procedures.

Before returning to campus after approved travel, those traveling will be required to contact either University Health Services (students) or the Wellness Center (faculty and staff) to determine whether any measures may be required to help safeguard our campus community. Please be aware that depending on the nature of any approved travel, there could be testing or quarantine requirements either upon arrival at the destination or upon return, depending on the status of the pandemic at the time of travel.

The University further expects that students, faculty and staff will avoid personal travel away from campus, their homes, or the local area during the fall 2020 semester except under exceptional circumstances (e.g., sick family member). Again, this expectation is based on our need to work together for the safety of the entire community. University Health Services and the Wellness Center are available resources for those who must make a personal trip and wish to discuss whether further measures are required before returning to campus.

Study abroad programs

After carefully considering current international travel restrictions and unknown international health and safety concerns and protocols, Fr. Jenkins approved a recommendation to suspend undergraduate and graduate study abroad programs for the fall 2020 semester. We know this decision is disappointing to faculty and students, particularly those associated with the School of Architecture's Rome Studies Program, but it is a necessary step to protect the health and safety of all. We are working to ensure a meaningful and fulfilling experience on campus, with particular attention to their international interests, for those students who would otherwise have been abroad.

Designing courses with two distinct periods of instruction

In an effort to provide guidance for creating flexible and resilient courses resistant to potential disruption, our [May 29 letter](#) suggested that faculty members restructure their semester-long courses into two distinctive periods or halves, with clearly articulated separate learning goals, assignments, and assessments for each. The aim of a modular design, that weights work across the course of the semester, is to ensure

that our students are able to complete some of the learning outcomes within a course as intended in the event of a second disruption to instruction. It is not our intention to be prescriptive in matters of course design; we recognize that the wide variety of approaches to course design and student assessment may not align with this recommendation. We propose it as one of our recommended student-centered strategies for instructional resilience.

Notre Dame Learning, the Faculty Task Force on Instructional Continuity, and the Office of Information Technologies have authored a suite of resources, models, and guidelines to assist in your fall planning. These are published on the [Instructional Continuity website](#), which will be updated regularly with new programs, workshops, and training events for all instructors. To get started right now, instructors can consult [Preparing a Fall Teaching Resilience Plan](#).

International students

As you can imagine, with many U.S. consulates around the world closed due to the coronavirus, we face considerable uncertainty about the ability of international undergraduate and graduate students to gain entry visas in time for the start of the fall semester. Notre Dame International is following these developments closely and we are working to develop work-around solutions where possible that would allow these students to begin fall classes on schedule. We will update you on this matter and our plans to deal with it as more information becomes available.

Schedule for the fall semester

The schedule for the fall 2020 semester has been set and is shown below:

Aug. 3-4	Mon – Tue	Graduate School Orientation
Aug. 3-9	Mon – Sun	TENTATIVE - Staged undergraduate move-in
Aug. 10	Monday	Classes begin for Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College
Aug. 17	Monday	Last date for all class changes at Notre Dame
Sept. 7	Monday	Labor Day - classes are in session
Sept. 28	Monday	Mid-Term deficiency reports submitted through insideND by 7 p.m.
Oct. 9	Friday	Last day for course discontinuance at Notre Dame
Nov. 3-15	Tues – Sun	Course Instructor Feedback administered
Nov. 12	Thursday	Last class day
Nov. 13-15	Fri – Sun	Reading days (no examinations permitted)
Nov. 16-20	Mon – Fri	Final examinations (no review sessions permitted)
Nov. 22	Sunday	TENTATIVE - Undergraduate halls close at 2:00 p.m.
Nov. 30	Monday	All grades submitted through insideND by 3:45 p.m.
Nov. 30	Mon-Fri	Registration appointments for Spring 2021 semester
- Dec. 11		
Jan. 3	Sunday	January 2021 graduation date (no ceremony)

Passing period and length of teaching day

In order to ensure that students and faculty can enter and exit classrooms in ways that minimize exposure, and to accommodate the staggered dismissal described above, we are adding an extra 5 minutes between classes. The registrar has already incorporated this increase in the passing period into the weekly schedule. In addition, in order to accommodate needs related to configuration of instructional spaces, we have added a teaching slot at the end of the day. We will provide updates on any changes to your scheduled class times as soon as possible. We are asking deans, department chairs, and the registrar to be sensitive to family responsibilities in selecting teaching times for departmental courses. We are committed to ensuring that decision-making at Notre Dame – around COVID-19 and more broadly – is family-friendly. Below we paste the standard class times that will be in effect for the fall 2020 semester.

Standard 50-Minute and 75-Minute Meeting Times for use of Registrar rooms*

MONDAY		TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	FRIDAY
50Min	75Min	75Min	50Min	75Min	75Min	50Min
MWF 8:00-8:50	MW 8:00-9:15	Dept Exam Time Slot- no UG Classes	MWF 8:00-8:50	MW 8:00-9:15	Dept Exam Time Slot- no UG Classes	MWF 8:00-8:50
50 Min	75 Min		50 Min	75 Min		50 Min
MWF 9:10-10:00			MWF 9:10-10:00			MWF 9:10-10:00
50 Min	MW 9:35-10:50	TR 9:35-10:50	50 Min	MW 9:35-10:50	TR 9:35-10:50	50 Min
	75 Min	75 Min		75 Min	75 Min	
MWF 10:25-11:15			MWF 10:25-11:15			MWF 10:25-11:15
50 Min	MW 11:10-12:25	TR 11:10-12:25	50 Min	MW 11:10-12:25	TR 11:10-12:25	50 Min
	75 Min	75 Min		75 Min	75 Min	
MWF 11:40-12:30			MWF 11:40-12:30			MWF 11:40-12:30
50 Min	MW 12:45-2:00	TR 12:45-2:00	50 Min	MW 12:45-2:00	TR 12:45-2:00	50 Min
	75 Min	75 Min		75 Min	75 Min	
MWF 2:30-3:20	MW 2:20-3:35	TR 2:20-3:35	MWF 2:30-3:20	MW 2:20-3:35	TR 2:20-3:35	MWF 2:30-3:20
50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min
MWF 4:05-4:55	MW 3:55-5:10	TR 3:55-5:10	MWF 4:05-4:55	MW 3:55-5:10	TR 3:55-5:10	MWF 4:05-4:55
50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min
MWF 5:40-6:30	MW 5:30-6:45	TR 5:30-6:45	MWF 5:40-6:30	MW 5:30-6:45	TR 5:30-6:45	MWF 5:40-6:30
50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min	75 Min	75 Min	50 Min
	MW 7:05-8:20	TR 7:05-8:20		MW 7:05-8:20	TR 7:05-8:20	
	75 Min	75 Min		75 Min	75 Min	
	NEW TIME	NEW TIME	DEPARTMENTAL EXAMS 8:00 pm - 9:15pm	NEW TIME	NEW TIME	

Concluding thoughts

Everything about COVID-19 – both the disease itself and our responses to it – have and will continue to evolve rapidly. We provide here the latest information, even as we recognize that some things will need to change as the situation changes. We will continue to seek your input as we work urgently, optimistically, and diligently toward the planned August 10 start date.

Even as we work toward this goal, we remain mindful of the tensions, divisions, and inequities within our society, yet hopeful that by working together we can overcome the challenges we face as a nation. We

quote here from a recent, compelling essay, written by our colleague, Marcus Cole, Dean of the Notre Dame Law School:

Like many African-American men, my experiences are far too common. While they have never left me, these memories are all too frequently brought back to the surface by watching the videos that have become routine on American televisions and mobile telephones. The callous murders of unarmed men like Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd are real for me. That could have been my father. That could have been me. That could be either one of my sons. And in a very real sense, like many other African-American men, I am George Floyd. Except, I can breathe. And I can do something. I must do something.

At the end of his essay, Dean Cole states the three specific actions he plans to take to change the world and challenges and supports us with his concluding statement: "What three things can you do to make this world a better place? How can I help you?"

We are confident that you all will help our wonderful University meet our ambitious and worthy goal of bringing the community back together. More importantly, we are comforted by the knowledge that so many will answer Dean Cole's challenge as we recommit to our Catholic mission and seek to build a more just society.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Thomas G. Burish
Provost

Shannon B. Cullinan
Executive Vice President

Marie Lynn Miranda
Provost-Elect