

Dear Quincy University community:

This message is the sixteenth update on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Please read this message with care, as it contains important information about our schedule for the next several months.**

I have now met with the members of the Executive Committee of the Quincy University Board of Trustees. Our deliberations concerned whether to continue planning for a return to face-to-face classes as early as April 8 or to continue with exclusively online instruction for the rest of the semester. The discussion was aided by information we received from many sources about the continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the advice of local health professionals.

It won't surprise anyone that we have been eager for students, faculty, and staff to return to campus, to give everyone some return to normalcy and the opportunity to learn from one another in the wonderful community we have created for ourselves in Quincy. We especially wanted our seniors and graduate students to have a traditional commencement at the conclusion of their spring term, in this 160<sup>th</sup> year of the university.

The practical conclusion we reached, unfortunately, was that some COVID-19-related restrictions in Illinois will likely persist well beyond April 7 and make it difficult or impossible to resume face-to-face classes much before the end of the semester. Further, we know many students are now hundreds of miles away from Quincy, at a time when travel has become more challenging and may remain so for some time. Calling students back to campus, at a time when some students may not be able to return, does not seem fair. Finally, we understand that many members of our community are eager for a final decision on our course format, so they can plan their lives for the remaining weeks of the semester.

In short, we know many people believe the worst of this pandemic might be behind us by May, while others worry that some serious effects of the pandemic could last into the summer months. Whatever the future might hold, all of us in leadership at QU are in agreement regarding the following:

- All classes at QU will continue in their online format for the remainder of the spring term due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Online graduate courses will continue to be taught as scheduled.
- We will work with each individual student, including graduating seniors and graduate students, and explore all options for completing coursework on time and meeting all student academic and graduation goals.
- University residence halls, houses, and the cafeteria will remain open for the remainder of the spring semester and will serve any student who remains in on-campus housing or wishes to return to on-campus housing before the end of the semester. For these students and for our employees on site, we will continue our program of deep cleaning and sanitizing our campus buildings. We will do everything we can to provide a safe experience, but also an enjoyable experience, for our students living on campus.

- The university will remain open, with our offices open to serve students and other members of the community. We will not be open to the general public until the State of Illinois lifts its stay-at-home directive after April 7, 2020. Until April 8, some of our offices will be operated by employees working from home, so email contact with faculty and staff will be essential.
- Students who do not wish to return to campus and want to retrieve belongings from their on-campus housing are welcome to do so as early as April 8, assuming the current stay-at-home directive is lifted by that date. Belongings must be retrieved no later than May 8. The removal of belongings and, if applicable, the residence hall checkout process are by appointment only. If a student is out of country or is otherwise unavailable to check out by May 8, storage of belongings on campus or some other arrangement will be possible. A future email message from Dr. Tracy will supply many details about the residence halls and other on-campus housing.
- Registration for Fall 2020 will go forward as planned. For undergraduates, enrollment will begin on March 30.
- Commencement for Spring 2020 will be postponed to a later date. It will NOT be cancelled. We are surveying students now to determine their preferences for rescheduling commencement.
- All Quincy University courses for Summer 2020 will be offered exclusively online.
- At present, the university is planning for its normal summer teaching schedule and normal summer activities in June, July, and August, with courses for the 2020 Fall Semester beginning as scheduled in August.

As always, we are giving you the best information available to us. Government announcements and other responses to the pandemic may result in changes to our schedule, as we all must cope with events beyond our control. Please be patient as we continue to make adjustments in the midst of an evolving situation.

I know we have given you disappointing news, though you may have been expecting it. We at QU want all our students, once again, in laboratories and on Penny Lane, in classrooms and the gymnasium, in practice rooms and playing volleyball on Friars' Field. We want our students to have every experience they imagined for themselves, and we imagined for them. And we want our students to sit next to or across from one another, without nervously estimating whether enough feet might separate them.

We know this is sad news for you, as it is for us. You have every right to be sad. This is the challenge we have been given, and the unwanted opportunity we now have, to overcome adversity and to persevere.

Please ask questions as you have them. Please be patient if we do not have immediate answers to all questions, though we always will get you those answers.

This may not be the semester any of us wanted – students, faculty, staff, parents, and trustees – but it is the semester we will proudly finish in May. Now is the time to comfort one another, to trust in one another, to demonstrate our character.

We may have to use tools like Google Meet, FaceTime, and Zoom to see and speak with those dear to us, but we will not be divided from one another.

We are one community. We are one family. Across the miles and across the generations, we are Hawks. May God bless us all.

Pax et Bonum,  
Dr. Brian McGee, President