



## Together at QU: A Message from President McGee on the 2020 Fall Semester

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June 15, 2020

Dear QU community:



*We'll be wearing masks this fall in the public areas on campus. Keep reading for more details.*

Just over two months from now, we fully expect that face-to-face instruction will be underway at Quincy University. I hope you are as excited about the new academic year as I am! As those of you who have read the previous COVID-19 updates will agree, there are limits to how much writing I can and should do about Star Trek, waffles, squirrels, and rabbits.

This is the forty-ninth update you have received from me (usually with Dr. Tracy) on the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, I am writing to provide important details on the latest plans for the safest possible return of students, faculty, and staff to campus and the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year at Quincy University. **All new and returning members of our community should read this message carefully**, as it summarizes the plans we have made thus far and provides information about the plans we have not yet finalized.

While we are giving you considerable information today, even more information will come to students, parents, faculty, and staff throughout the summer from the relevant campus leaders and offices.

Our two goals at QU are (1) to allow our students to have the best possible teaching and learning experience and (2) to keep our community safe. We believe both goals can be achieved if the members of our community follow basic guidelines for public health. While we think our small classes and location in Quincy, Illinois, create many advantages for QU where the pandemic is concerned, we all have to work together to reduce the risk of new COVID-19 cases. It's also a reality that, no matter how carefully we plan and prepare, changes in medical knowledge, in state or county public health directives, and in local disease outbreaks will inevitably require us to change our plans. We ask for your patience as we adapt to changing circumstances over the course of the next year. At the same time, we are excited about new majors, courses, and campus improvements for Fall 2020 that will work to the benefit of QU students.

While today's message is intended for returning students, faculty, and staff, there is also a note below about the rescheduling of the Spring 2020 commencement.

So, let me review with you what we know (and what we don't know yet) about the coming academic year and your life on campus. In addition to the information we provide below, you will hear much more from us this summer, as we give you the newest information about the fall terms. We have already scheduled two **online**

**town hall meetings** on June 22 and July 15, both of which will be open to students and parents and will take place at 5:30 p.m. (Central Time). In those town hall meetings, we will gladly answer questions from members of our community. Of course, any new information we provide in these town hall meetings will also be provided to all students, parents, faculty, and staff via email.

## **Academic Calendar and Summer Schedule**

We will publish a revised version of the **academic calendar** on the QU website for the 2020 Fall Semester. As prepared by Dr. Teresa Reed, Vice President for Academic Affairs, the revised calendar for Fall 2020 also appears at the bottom of this message. We will publish a revised version of the 2021 Spring Semester in the near future.

As you will see, the revised calendar will keep August 17, 2020 (with classes now starting at 8:00 a.m.), as our first day of classes for the 2020 Fall Semester, and all students who already have registered for Fall 2020 will retain their current course schedule and course meeting times. However, we have made some significant changes to the academic calendar for Fall 2020, which I will summarize here. These changes are being made for Fall 2020 in light of the best available public health guidance and following a lengthy review by the university's administrative and academic leadership:

- QU will be holding classes on Labor Day.
- The two-day Fall Break will be eliminated.
- Final examinations will conclude on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.
- The winter commencement will take place on the Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving.
- Spring Semester classes will begin in January 2021.

Staff who would ordinarily receive Labor Day as a holiday will be allowed to take a floating holiday during September, October, or November, subject to the approval of their supervisors. Any staff who support the winter commencement on the morning of Wednesday, November 25, will be offered compensatory leave time.

We are adopting this revised fall schedule because of the heightened risk later in the semester of a national or regional spike in COVID-19 infections. The earlier we end the semester, the more likely it is that we won't have to finish the semester online. It's also the case, candidly, that we would like most of our students, faculty, and staff to stay put on campus or in Quincy as much as possible during the semester, rather than engaging in recreational or other unnecessary travel. While some travel will be necessary and unavoidable, an overall reduction in recreational travel during the semester will reduce the risk of infection for members of our community.

Regarding our **check-in schedule** for Fall 2020, we anticipate welcoming new and returning students in some fall sports on July 31 or August 1, along with student employees. New students will check in on August 8, with other returning students checking in between August 11-15. A more detailed version of the check-in schedule will be emailed to all students at the direction of Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President of Student Development.

Please remember that all academic calendars and institutional schedules are subject to change, especially in these uncertain times. We will not change these schedules unless we have a good reason to do so, as we know all members of our community rely on the published schedules for planning purposes.

## Healthy Hawks Compact

As the 2020 Fall Semester begins, we will ask members of the QU community to sign a *Healthy Hawks Compact*, which will include the following pledge:

- Whenever possible, I will keep a distance of six feet or more from people other than my roommate(s).
- I will wear a mask when in public spaces on the QU campus, especially when social distancing isn't possible.
- I will wash my hands regularly and practice good hygiene, including covering my mouth and nose when I cough or sneeze.
- I will stay in my residence hall room or at home if I don't feel well.

There was a time, just a few months ago, when, for example, the benefits of social distancing and mask-wearing weren't fully understood. While there is still much we don't know about COVID-19, the science is clear on the benefits of these simple steps to reduce transmission of the disease.

At the present time, businesses and government offices in Quincy are open, though some places of business have new rules for their customers. Once we begin the semester, we ask that all members of our community behave responsibly when off campus. In addition, while we recognize that some travel is necessary and unavoidable, unnecessary travel away from our region will be discouraged during the academic term.

We expect there will be many campus events throughout the semester, with ample opportunities for interaction. Those events will require masks and social distancing. Whenever we schedule any campus events, we will do so consistent with public health guidance from the county and state.

Of course, members of our community should try to avoid large social gatherings, and, if social gatherings are organized, they should be small and include masks and social distancing.

## COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Healthcare

COVID-19 testing is and will be available in Quincy, Illinois, throughout the academic year for anyone who has symptoms or has some other risk factor that makes testing appropriate. Our final Fall 2020 institutional plan for COVID-19 testing will be announced in July and will be consistent with the guidance we receive from the Centers for Disease Control and state and local public health authorities and healthcare professionals. The bottom line is that all QU students will have access this fall to testing for COVID-19.

If any member of the QU community is diagnosed with COVID-19, that person will be asked to help us identify anyone with whom he or she has recently come into contact. This **contact tracing** will allow us to speak directly with anyone who may have been exposed to the disease. Quarantine facilities will be available on our campus for students. In some cases, students will be asked to use those facilities or remain in their off-campus homes and to self-isolate until they have a negative COVID-19 test or are no longer able to transmit the disease to others.

Quincy, Illinois, has an excellent regional hospital, located one mile away from campus, and a strong regional network of healthcare providers. Any member of the QU community can expect superior healthcare in Quincy, should she or he contract COVID-19. QU has been in and will be in close contact with local healthcare professionals and the county health department and has discussed at length the health-and-safety needs of our community with those professionals.

## Coming to Campus

When you come to campus this summer and fall, you will need to wear a mask any time you are in a hallway, public restroom, campus office with other people present, or in a classroom, laboratory, or any other space where other people are present and social distancing cannot be guaranteed. See the next page for more information on face-to-face classes. If you have come to campus and have forgotten your mask, please call the phone number posted on most exterior campus doors, so that someone can bring a mask to you.



If you are alone in a campus office or room, or are in your residence hall room with your roommate, you will have the option to remove your mask. You should put your mask back on if someone else comes in the room.

If you are outdoors, you have the option to remove your mask if you are walking alone or can safely maintain a distance of six feet or more from other people.

## Face-to-Face Classes

We expect the great majority of class meetings at QU to occur face-to-face in classrooms and laboratories. There will be some changes, however, which are designed to create a safer environment for our students, faculty, and staff:

- Classrooms and labs will be sanitized regularly by our facilities team.
- Classrooms and labs will be rearranged to make social distancing possible. Some rooms will have fewer chairs and workstations. Special arrangements are still being finalized for some classes (e.g., fine arts).
- In many classrooms, students will be asked to use the same seat throughout the semester or class term, which will make contact tracing easier in the event that someone contracts COVID-19. When cleaning supplies are available in the classroom or lab, students and faculty will be encouraged to clean their workstations at the beginning of each class session.
- Students will wear facemasks when entering or leaving classrooms and labs.
- In many classrooms where seating or other arrangements allow for social distancing, students may be able to remove masks once seated or at their workstations. Masks should be worn whenever anyone is moving around during a class.

Because classrooms are being adjusted to facilitate social distancing, it is possible that some courses will be rescheduled in different classrooms. Please pay attention to email or other announcements of classroom changes. Further, and for reasons that may or may not be related to COVID-19, it is also possible that course sections will be split or new sections added in the coming weeks to improve the student experience.

## Online Classes

Some Fall 2020 courses at QU already are scheduled for entirely online instruction, and those courses will remain online. In addition, because of instructor availability, some courses currently scheduled for face-to-face instruction may be shifted to online instruction. Students will be advised, when appropriate, to check their course schedules for updates.

As we all know, it is possible that a major COVID-19 outbreak in our region will result in a shift to online instruction during Fall 2020, as was the case for Spring 2020. Our faculty and academic leaders are planning for this possibility, though our goal is to start and finish the semester with most of our courses being offered face-to-face.

Finally, some QU students may have health concerns that will discourage them from taking face-to-face courses on campus. Fortunately, QU already planned to offer some online courses for Fall 2020, and some additional online course sections will be opened and available for registration later this summer. Any students who want to shift to online-only instruction at QU for Fall 2020 should discuss those options with their academic advisors.

## **Faculty Office Hours and Campus Meetings**

Face-to-face meetings will be possible for many students during the Fall 2020 semester, including faculty office hours and advising meetings. However, some faculty and staff may only be available for video meetings or for phone calls and email, and face-to-face meeting times may be more difficult to arrange for a variety of practical reasons. Social distancing and/or facemasks should be used during any campus meetings.

## **Residence Halls and Campus Houses**

As indicated above, students should practice social distancing and wear facemasks when in public hallways or common areas in residence halls and campus houses. Small gatherings in residence halls and campus houses will be possible if social distancing and facemasks are used. In addition to the work of facilities personnel to sanitize public spaces, students will have access to cleaning supplies and should regularly sanitize the areas they use to reduce the risk of new COVID-19 cases.

For Fall 2020, students who live on campus will be asked to bring their own **personal medical kit**, including a digital thermometer; at least three washable cloth facemasks that fit appropriately, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol; and a fever-reducing and pain-relieving medication (e.g., ibuprofen). All students on campus will also be given a Quincy University-branded facemask.

Under certain conditions, students will have the option to request continued use of residence halls and campus houses after the end of the fall semester and before classes resume in January. Information about this option will be made available by Dr. Tracy.

## **Dining Services**

Dining Services will operate differently this year than in previous years. When in use, the cafeteria will be sanitized regularly. Self-serve options for food may be eliminated, with food served instead by the dedicated staff of Chartwells. The total seating capacity of the cafeteria will likely be reduced, and social distancing will be expected. Additional information will be provided for using the cafeteria during the semester.

And, yes, I will still be hosting a socially distanced waffle extravaganza at the beginning of the year. Some of you have read about that before.

## **Clubs, Activities, and Greek Life**

Club meetings, Greek life, and other activities will be allowed on campus during the fall semester. Some meetings may be conducted via video. Other meetings and activities will occur face-to-face, as long as social distancing and facemasks can be used.

## Intercollegiate Athletics

NCAA student-athletes, especially for the fall sports, will receive information from Mr. Marty Bell, Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, or from their coaches about practices, games, and the procedures designed to keep student-athletes safe. For example, weight-room access and equipment will be managed differently this year, consistent with the best available public-health information.

## Rescheduling the Spring 2020 Commencement

We anticipate rescheduling the Spring 2020 commencement during September 2020. The date should be announced in early July. In the meantime, caps, gowns, and honors regalia will be mailed soon to students who are not planning to pick up their gear on campus or to attend commencement.

Our rescheduled Spring 2020 commencement will likely be held in QU's Pepsi Arena. We will likely have multiple ceremonies so that we can reduce the number of people in attendance at any one ceremony. Every graduate will have the opportunity to participate in one of the ceremonies.

## Conclusion

While this letter has contained a great deal of information, please remember that much information already has been provided in previous weekly messages, including important information about the second round of CARES Act funding and the need for students to complete the FAFSA if they want to be eligible for that funding.



The 2020 Fall Semester will require unprecedented cooperation among all members of our QU community so that we can preserve the wonderful teaching-and-learning environment of this great institution, while taking every reasonable step to protect the health of our community. Together, we will take care of one another. We will enjoy the beauty of our campus. We will learn from one another, and we will get all the benefits that come from engaging one another in a small, warm, and caring community. Our students will be able to take full advantage of QU's commitment to student success.

We can't wait for our students to come to campus and check in. August 17, our first day of classes, will be a great day to be a Hawk. Of course, at QU, every day is a great day. We'll see you soon. Together, I believe we can have a rewarding and enjoyable Fall 2020. Thank you, and go Hawks!

Pax et Bonum,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian R. McGee".

Brian R. McGee, Ph.D.  
President

P.S. To prove we take wearing facemasks seriously, I will personally donate \$100 to the Quincy University Fund if anyone catches me without a mask in a Quincy University hallway before December 1, 2020. Dr. Tracy has made the same pledge.



## Academic Calendar 2020 Fall Semester

	<b>Fall 2020</b>	
Last Day of Summer MBA	Fri.....	Aug 7
Summer MBA Grades Due	Wed.....	Aug 12
Residence Halls open for new students	Sat.....	Aug 8
New Student Orientation and Testing	Sat-Sun.....	Aug 8-16
Residence Halls open for returning students	Sat.....	Aug 15
Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. including A Session & Fall MBA	Mon.....	Aug 17
Late Registration and Add/Drop Period ends at 5:00 p.m. for Full/A Session classes & Fall MBA	Tues.....	Aug 25
All courses dropped beginning this date receive a grade of "W"	Wed.....	Aug 26
Labor Day - Classes in Session	Mon.....	Sept 7
Last day to add internship/practicum/independent study courses	Tues.....	Sept 8
Last day to withdraw from A Session classes	Tues.....	Sept 22
Franciscan Heritage Week (Classes in session)	Mon-Fri.....	Sept 28-Oct 2
Last day of A Session classes	Fri.....	Oct 2
First day of B Session classes. Mid-term grades due by 4:00 p.m. for all 100/200 level courses.	Mon.....	Oct 5
Last day to withdraw from Fall MBA classes	Wed.....	Oct 7
Last day to add/drop B Session classes	Tues.....	Oct 13
Last day of the Fall MBA Term	Fri.....	Oct 23
Fall MBA Grades Due	Wed.....	Oct 28
Last day to withdraw from Full Session courses	Tues.....	Oct 27
Registration for Spring 2020 begins	Mon.....	Nov 2
First day of Winter MBA classes	Mon.....	Nov 2
Last day to add/drop Winter MBA classes (by 4:30 p.m.)	Fri.....	Nov 6
Last day to withdraw from B Session classes	Tues.....	Nov 10
Last day of Full Session classes	Tues.....	Nov 17
Last day of B Session classes	Fri.....	Nov 20
Study Day	Wed.....	Nov 18
Final Examinations	RF,MT.....	Nov 19, 20, 23, 24
MBA Winter Term break	Mon-Sun.....	Nov. 23-Jan 3
Winter Commencement, Textbooks returned by noon.	Wed.....	Nov 25
Grades due at noon	Mon.....	Nov 30

*Note:* All academic calendars and institutional schedules are subject to change, without prior notice. Additional information may be added to the calendar as new information becomes available.

*Date prepared:* June 15, 2020