

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Today we conducted another first for Northwestern University. We held a virtual New Student Orientation for many incoming students on the Glendale Campus. The majority of new students were online; however, a few students came to campus due to a lack of internet availability in their new homes. I found it so refreshing to see the students who came to campus; they did so with great respect as they socially distanced themselves, wore cloth face masks and waved and welcomed each other as new members of our academic campus. For me, it was so energizing to once again see students on campus; like many of you, we have missed seeing the campus alive with activity, and today provided a glimmer of hope that we are beginning to see a new day.

The COVID-19 Response Team met today, Tuesday, May 26, 2020, and continued to plan for a gradual return of more departments and functions on our campuses. This comes as the State of Illinois Governor has announced the state will be moving to a new phase of opening on May 30, 2020. While many faculty and staff have remained on campus in critical positions, we are working on a strategic approach to ready all of our campus facilities for additional colleagues.

Announcements

- As announced last week, the Northwestern University Clinics have remained open for emergency care since last March; we are now planning to bring more patients into all of our Northwestern University Clinics beginning on June 1, 2020, with the exception being the Dental Institute on the Downers Grove Campus, which will increase their patient population on June 8, 2020.
- In order to assess and identify what social distancing, signage and facility engineering changes we will need to make in our academic facilities, we have developed a check list of standards that must be met. The COVID-19 Response Team, in groups of three members each, will be walking through our campus buildings to assure that all our facility standards are met.
- The Northwestern University Facility Readiness Standards are based on the standards of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the local public health guidelines. Our standards are designed to make our faculty, staff and students feel safe and secure when on campus. We will not open any facility until it is ready.
- The target date of June 8, 2020 is planned for campus facilities that serve student populations. Other functions will be opening after June 15, 2020. Once the opening schedule is confirmed, you will be receiving this schedule via an Evening Update later this week.
- If you have been approved for a temporary work from home arrangement, you will be asked to work with your supervisor to arrange a return date in June, 2020. The Human Resources department will work with those faculty and staff who are unable to return due to illness or extenuating circumstances.

Bringing more patients, faculty, staff and eventually students back to campus life is indeed a difficult but very important plan. Campus life provides everyone with a sense of purpose and this academic purpose is being integrated into all of our new standards of operation. We are not rushing into a speedy return because an Executive Order may be lifted, but rather we will return when we can assure all of you that our facilities, plans and campus community are ready. I cannot wait to welcome all of you back!

Be well.

Dr. G.