



May 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Necessary Steps in Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

Dear Members of the Staff and Faculty,

Despite everything, I have continued to find many moments these past few months when your care-filled service of our students, each other and our mission have filled me with deep gratitude. I want to thank each of you for manifesting the generosity of spirit that is a hallmark of our community.

I have written at various times to share important decisions or to inform you about future plans. Today is an occasion for both. Anyone reading or watching the news locally or nationally knows that colleges and universities are experiencing unprecedented financial pressures and uncertainty. Schools everywhere are announcing a variety of significant measures to address these challenges.

Difficult But Necessary Steps

As I noted in a previous message, the University was in a solid financial position when the pandemic hit because of our collective good work and measured decisions. We are, however, under the same strains as our peers. In admissions, for example, we have done better than some schools but are still well below the goals we set for our incoming class and for our budget before this crisis began.

Because of the shortfall we anticipate in enrollment and a host of other financial pressures related to the pandemic, we must reduce our 2020-21 budget for next year by at least \$4 million to address this immediate challenge and to ensure the University's future wellbeing.

The following steps will remain in place throughout 2020-21 and will take effect on June 1 to coincide with the start of our budget year:

- Members of Cabinet have volunteered to take a reduction in their salary.
- Members of the staff will not receive an across-the-board increase in salaries.
- The University will reduce its pension contribution for administrators and staff by 3%, a move that will not affect employee take-home pay.
- Open faculty and staff positions will be frozen and filled only in extraordinary circumstances.
- We will continue to reduce as much as possible regular expenditures across campus.
- In June, we will announce details for a staff window retirement program.
- At this time, we will not temporarily furlough or layoff any staff positions, but staff members who were prevented from working or limited in their hours because of campus closure will need to use at least 1/2 of their allotted vacation time for 2020 during the period of June 1 to July 31. The Office of Human Resources will provide additional

guidance to staff and supervisors regarding administration of this measure within the coming days.

- We will seek employee retention credits through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide partial relief for the positions we have retained while campus was closed.

The above steps would be difficult at any university but are even more painful because we are such a strong community and because we don't want to see any members of our community suffer. I want you to know that this has been foremost in our minds as we identified alternatives.

In this challenging time, I invite all employees to consider joining members of Cabinet in a voluntary salary reduction and/or in a donation of unused vacation time back to the University. Anyone wishing to do either or both of these options can do so confidentially by contacting Patricia Tetreault, Vice President for Human Resources, at patricia.tetreault@scranton.edu. Patti and her team in Human Resources are also available to answer questions about the above steps by emailing HR@scranton.edu.

Becoming More Efficient

Over the coming months, we will implement projects to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of campus operations without compromising the quality of the experience we provide our students. We will move forward with long-planned projects and also leverage what we have learned from this period of virtual work. As has been the case in the past, I expect that some measures we will implement will lead to position eliminations.

Maintaining Our Momentum

In April, I noted that flexibility, imagination and determination from every area of campus are essential not just to sustain the University but to ensure that we retain the momentum we have worked so hard together to build. As we address financial challenges for today, we will continue to invest in new programs and plans for tomorrow. Here are just a few examples:

- You will all have the opportunity to comment over the summer on our new strategic plan, which we will present to the Board of Trustees in the Fall for approval. We continue to work with the University Planning Council to build upon the work of other major review processes. We also know that the future success of our university can only be built upon a strategy that is uniquely Jesuit and uniquely Scranton.
- We will continue to implement new academic and student support initiatives from our successful Strategic Enrollment Planning effort and will remain committed to this process as we identify new ideas. For example, the Board of Trustees just approved two new academic programs: a Doctor of Occupational Therapy and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Cybercrime and Homeland Security.
- We will reduce capital expenditures but will not stop improving our campus, attending to infrastructure needs or even acquiring property when projects address health and safety concerns or support strategic enrollment or planning goals.

Our Way of Proceeding

Together, we have done so much so well to bring us to where we stand today. As we look ahead, much remains cloudy, but I want to reinforce our leadership approach. We are being prudent and deliberate in our decisions. We are not reacting to what other universities are doing or planning but are instead recognizing the singularity of the Scranton experience. We will continue constantly to assess the impact of the pandemic, especially into the future, and will adjust our response as warranted.

For example, as we await further guidance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D., Provost and Senior Vice President, is leading a broadly representative fall planning group. The group and its subgroups are making excellent progress crafting recommended options. He will update you all about this progress later this week.

Finding God in All Things

Saint Ignatius Loyola calls us to find God in all things. For him, God seemed most present during the most difficult and painful times of his life. When this chapter of the University's history is written, I am confident that it will be remembered not for darkness and challenge. It will, instead, shine into the future as a time when our shared love and devotion to this community and place created a graced moment that made all the difference for each other and, especially, for our students.

May God bless and keep you, and may God bless The University of Scranton

Sincerely,

Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.
President