

Faculty Senate Call 3 April 2020 1 PM

Thank you for inviting me to join your meeting I want to begin by saying personally and on behalf of the university leadership team and Trustees how impressed we have been with the efforts of our faculty, staff and students at this time.

I wanted you to know that we are also in constant contact with the City and the relationship we have with Bob Donchez enables us to work together seamlessly. We are also in daily discussions with local health care providers and health departments through our Health and Wellness Center.

While the situation remains very fluid and the number of cases in Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley are increasing, the University has addresses much of what must be done to shut down the campus to essential personnel only. As you will recall, on Thursday March 19, Governor Wolf ordered all non-life-sustaining operations to close their physical spaces. Universities were listed as non-life sustaining operations. On Wednesday March 25, the Governor increased the stay-at-home order to include Lehigh and Northampton counties. As of this Wednesday, the entire state is now under a stay at home order. We are currently aware of 14 students who have tested positive for COVID-19, none of whom are on campus but 1 is in the local area. There are over 7,000 cases in PA, 400 cases confirmed in Northampton county, and our Health and Wellness Center believes this is an under-estimate of the actual number because of the difficulty of testing.

I am beginning to think of our institutional response and work in terms of phases. The first phase was getting students home from study abroad locations and then placing them in situations where they could complete their classes. This was done well by our international affairs office, and

faculty stood up set of courses to enable them to complete their studies. Only 2 students decided to remain abroad, both in Australia.

The second phase was getting students home from campus and moving our courses on-line. This was a huge lift by many areas of the University. The faculty responded incredibly to this challenge and the work of Library and Technology Services was phenomenal. We have moved over 900 courses to on-line format, 300 sections (labs and recitation connected to a class), and 200 specialized classes (senior thesis, dissertations, special topics, directed reading). Pat Farrell's letter (which all of you have seen) provides a sense of the ongoing issues we are all working on together. I have been impressed with the leadership of our deans and associate deans in this situation. All are working together as best they can to address faculty and student issues and make the remote academic experiences as robust as we can. As a runner myself, I like Pat's analogy of the middle miles of a marathon, but there are days and indicators that make me worry that this is a triathlon and we are just finishing the swim, now headed to the next chapter which will require a different focus and skills.

For students remaining, as of today we have 174 undergraduates and 207 graduate students still on campus. This will continue to decrease as some expect to head home soon. Food from Lower Cort is now bagged and available three times a week and students can pick up multiple days of meals that can be cooked or microwaved in their living spaces. Using guidance from our Health and Wellness Center to maintain social distancing and space separation within our residence halls, we moved many students over the weekend (thanks to ABM and our residential staff) so that everyone has their own room and bathroom and therefore can be quarantined in place if needed. We will be doing a second phase of relocations this weekend to spread people out in some of buildings. This enables LUPD to better provide safety and also enables us to clean and close a large number of residential buildings.

The third phase was the transition to working remotely for most of our employees, the rapid ramping down of research, and the closing of the

physical campus to all except essential personnel. We are mostly through this. There have been some concerns about research animals and high technology equipment that need periodic maintenance resulting in requests from the colleges for a larger than expected list of essential personnel. Pat Farrell, Jason Schiffer, Alan Snyder, Frank Roth and Kim Nimmo are deciding how best to address this, and it is our intention to complete this by the end of the weekend. Institutions are addressing this in many ways, and we need to decide what is best for Lehigh.

The phase that I believe we are now entering is preparing for the future. One of the reasons for this is that when the future begins is determined by the COVID-19 virus. As far as preparing for the future, this has two major components. First, planning for the financial impact, and prioritizing and understanding the critical financial decisions that may be ahead of us in the time to come. Our business continuity group has begun its work on this matter. Kevin Clayton is assembling a small group of Trustees to work closely with us. We will have to remain agile in this as there is much we do not know. I hope we are up and running on campus in the fall, but frankly it is too early to tell. We are beginning to identify the dates by which we would have to make such decisions. They need to be close enough so that we have high confidence the decision is the right one, but far enough in advance so that our Lehigh community (faculty, students, staff, parents) can plan accordingly. There is much being discussed as we begin to frame these long term discussions. The second part of this phase is being prepared to have our physical assets used as locations for health care workers to rest and possible makeshift locations for sick individuals. We are in planning discussions with both LVHN and St. Lukes, and I want to thank Kim Nimmo for coordinating that effort.

Today would have been honors convocation and Pat and I wrote to those students and their families who would have been recognized at Honors Convocation. It is the first event of the spring that recognized achievement and we want to let our recognized students and parents know that we are proud of their academic accomplishments. As you know, we have now postponed Commencement, and hope that we will have this event in the

fall. We have also cancelled in-person global programs for the summer (e.g., Iacocca Internships). Our signature programs out west (e.g., Startup Academy) will be virtual. Pat and the Deans are addressing decisions about summer courses.

I attended a call about the CARES 2020 act and how it might apply to higher education. There is a lot that is clear and then there are details that remain unclear as to what can or cannot be supported based on the funding provided for higher education. We are tracking this closely. Chris Carter, our AVP for Government Relations in DC, is actively engaged with various agencies and higher education groups in DC about these issues. We are also watching Pennsylvania legislation closely as well as some of our programs receive support from the State. This morning I attended a virtual briefing with Deputy Secretary of Higher Education, Noe Ortega and I have been a regular on calls for daily updates provided by our PA consortium, the Association of Independent Colleges and University in Pennsylvania, and briefings by the American Council on Education.

I attended my largest Zoom meeting ever yesterday, the first ever all staff Student Affairs zoom meeting that had 92 people attending. I was impressed with what everyone was doing to engage with our students. They are working hard to provide a touchstone of the Lehigh experience to our students, giving them support, comfort, and familiarity as they all navigate their own concerns with family, friends, and loved ones. There are many virtual events – as we speak trivia night is beginning. We have two groups still on campus, the Assistant Directors of Residential Life and the teams at the Health and Wellness Center. Our mental health support personnel are also available to both undergraduate and graduate students, and have been quite busy as you might expect. The various cohort groups are meeting regularly through virtual chats or zoom. I had the opportunity to hear 5 students present about their situations (one from each class and a graduate student). I thought their words were inspiring, how they are adjusting to this new normal and learning how to be productive and learn

in this new modality. All stressed their efforts to create a routine for themselves. My favorite line was from a junior – “I feel like it’s the weekend and I’m always waiting for Monday to come and classes to start, but I’m getting used to it”. I think there will be significant changes as a result of what we are learning to do right now. That said, they all miss their friends and being on the Lehigh Campus. Parents are sending me and posting pictures of the virtual Lehigh campuses, carving out space in their homes and labelling it with names like FML.

So, with that I’ll stop, thank you and your colleagues for everything you are going. I also hope your families are healthy and safe. I’ll turn the meeting back to Doug.