



October 14, 2020

Dear Students,

To date, La Roche University has had only one confirmed case of COVID-19 this semester. I believe in our community's ability and resolve to keep students, staff and faculty as safe as possible. To do so, we all must continue to practice social distancing, persistently wear our masks and remain committed to daily, mandatory, health screenings. Collectively, we have done a very good job of this thus far.

Our healthy start leads us to believe that we can reopen in the spring under similar campus rules, residence hall conditions and using a similar class structure. With nearly all classes using hi-flex formats, and with many others courses offered fully online, students will have flexibility in how they complete their coursework. However, as we did this fall, we plan to open with a modified schedule that minimizes travel back and forth from campus. Following these parameters, we plan to:

- **Resume spring semester classes on Monday, Jan. 25.** The extended winter break will allow faculty to prepare for spring semester classes, allow students to recharge, and allow for any pre-return self-quarantining that may be necessary.
- **Eliminate spring break.** While eliminating a break is never ideal, we must do what we can to mitigate the risk of a campus outbreak by reducing mass travel to and from campus.
- **Observe, but shorten Easter Break from Good Friday, April 2 through Easter Sunday, April 4.** Classes will end immediately after the last class period on Thursday night and resume Monday morning.
- **Complete final exams by Friday, May 7.** Keeping final exam week the same means that student internships and employment opportunities will not be negatively affected. Unlike the current semester, our plan is to keep students in-residence throughout finals week. Our hope is there will not be a need for moving finals to remote delivery.
- **Schedule Commencement for Saturday, May 8.** Our ability to hold commencement, and the manner in which it is delivered, depends on the restrictions set forth by the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Allegheny County and the University in response to extant conditions. Updates will be provided as regulations are modified.

At present, due to travel restrictions related to COVID-19 both between and within countries, study abroad trips have not been scheduled. Our hope is to offer a range of opportunities for our students, but our ability to do so may be outside of our control. Decisions regarding May trips will depend upon the availability of appropriate, safe and secure destinations, and our ability to travel to them. We anticipate making these decisions by mid-January 2021.

We anticipate all current residence hall COVID-19 protocols and restrictions to remain in place for the spring semester. If your housing plans change, please contact the Housing and Residence Life office to let them know.

Please know that we will do everything we can to provide you with a great experience. Unfortunately, COVID-19 affects many aspects of university life. Should the virus' arc take a turn for the worse, the University may need to take proactive steps to avoid health issues going forward. I will keep you apprised of those decisions as they are made.

It certainly has been an extraordinarily challenging time, and I thank everyone for their care for each other this fall. I assure you that your efforts have made a difference, and I wish you the very best on the remainder of your classes, exams and papers.

All the Best,

Dr. Howard Ishiyama
Provost & Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs