



Office of the
**Vice President &
Chancellor**
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES SPOKANE

Dear Colleagues,

Congratulations on reaching the end of the spring semester, probably among the most challenging semesters any of us have experienced. You should be proud of the way you've adapted and persevered the past two months.

As we move into the summer months, I want to reiterate that planning continues specific to our eventual return to campus. Again, we are being intentional in not setting a specific date for transition, as there are a number of factors that dictate timing, namely the guidance of government and health officials. Additionally, our transition will be timed in concert with the WSU system as a whole. An abundance of advanced notice and communication will be provided prior to our return.

In terms of fall semester, as President Schulz has stated, WSU as a system is planning on some form of in-person instruction. [As we mentioned in our May 1 communication](#), we will follow our system's lead, while continuing to keep the safety of our campus population our top priority.

Already, essential personnel have started to make our campus friendly to social distancing guidelines. This includes the ordering of additional disinfectant supplies, Plexiglas barriers in applicable areas, fewer chairs in conference rooms and classrooms, and more. We are also working on posting signage across campus and in high-capacity areas reminding people to use proper social distancing.

I have also been working with our vice chancellors to prepare for a return to campus. Here are some updates from different areas on campus:

Academic Affairs

WSU Health Sciences continues to educate the health care workforce of the future. Our graduates are well-equipped to work in the rapidly changing environment of COVID and prepared for the risks inherent to infectious disease.

In terms of education delivery during the fall semester, we plan to deliver the most appropriate instruction that will lead to the best outcomes for all of our students. For most programs, and in consideration of the unique clinical and lab experience needs of our health sciences students, we will work to resume as much in-person instruction as is safe.

The approach to classroom instruction will need to be flexible to ensure physical distancing and the ability to adapt to individual and community circumstances as the pandemic evolves. We will adhere to established protocols to address employee and student health concerns, including opportunities to interact virtually when needed. Additionally, we will continue to adhere to other best practices recommended by health experts, including environmental disinfection and frequent hand washing.

This is the new world we live in that not only affects our teaching and learning, but will continue to be the experience of our health sciences graduates in the future.

Student Affairs

[Student Affairs](#) on our campus continues to offer its services online. To make this happen, the team engaged in a lot of creative problem-solving to now offer things like virtual tours. We also went online with financial aid, educational programming, career support, community engagement, and so much more. The Campus Pantry is providing grocery reimbursements for students and will remain open this summer. We are still providing Cougar ID cards - if you have a new employee, email [Logan Steele](#) about the new process we are using. The [Spokane Academic Library](#) is physically closed, yet staff are still providing remote services and assistance.

Financial

The global pandemic has impacted the economy dramatically now and will for many years to come. Higher education and the health care industry are grappling with financial issues that were unforeseen as recently as two months ago. While the long-term effects are not completely clear, we do know that higher education and health care will be delivered differently in the future. We also know that we need to redouble our commitment to strong financial stewardship to deliver high-quality educational experiences with limited financial resources.

Research

Our research enterprise is growing and continues to be essential to Washington state. Critical COVID-related research has occurred throughout the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, while we've also maintained our research areas of excellence, including addictions, autism, cancer, chronic disease, community health, health policy, neuroscience, pharmacology, rare genetic disorders, and sleep and performance. Health disparities remain an undercurrent in many of these areas. Relatedly, we know COVID-19 has adversely impacted many, which means our emphasis on health disparities is more critical than ever. Simply put, our research activities are vital to the recovery of our state and its residents in every county.

Again, I want to thank you for your adaptability as we enter into a third month of working from home. I look forward to seeing you on campus soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daryll B. DeWald".

Daryll DeWald
Vice President and Chancellor
WSU Health Sciences Spokane