Dear Students,

With significant health and social challenges facing our country and the world, we are more dedicated than ever to your safe return to campus. From our founding, Notre Dame has sought to be a force for good in the world and cultivate an education of both mind and heart. We support those aspirations in the Division of Student Affairs through fostering community for all students, nurturing your health and well-being, and supporting your individual formation.

I write today to provide you with an update on how we will achieve those student life goals during this most unusual semester. We have missed your physical presence on campus, and we are truly excited to welcome you back. As Father Jenkins has emphasized, we believe in the educational value of the on-campus experience for all our students. Reopening campus will require adaptations and sacrifices from all of us — students, faculty, and staff. He outlined a set of health and safety practices designed to minimize the possibility of COVID-19 infection for all, and especially to avoid exposure for those among us who are most vulnerable to severe illness. He also shared a new University travel policy, which indicates University-related travel will be strictly limited to essential travel and expects personal travel to be avoided except in exceptional circumstances (e.g., sick family members). Every member of our community must adhere to these practices and policies so we can remain here on campus and together this fall.

Please note we are proceeding with caution with our return to campus, and beginning conservatively in terms of modifications to facilities, programs, and services. The safety of you, our faculty, and our staff is our top priority, and what scientists know about transmission of the virus continues to evolve. We will continually monitor the effectiveness and necessity of our protocols, which were formulated based on guidance from the CDC, infectious disease specialists at the Cleveland Clinic, and local health officials. We will add additional measures if needed based on the best available medical advice. On the other hand, if we can safely relax some guidelines over time, we will do so. Thank you for your patience and your commitment to honoring these expectations, some of which will require us to adjust or postpone beloved campus traditions. However, just as drive-by events or virtual sing-alongs have emerged nationwide, I have every confidence you will bring creativity and ingenuity to the ways you connect with one another and make campus life vibrant. We are eager to collaborate with you to create these opportunities.
Returning to Campus and Welcoming New Students

In partnership with local public health officials, students and families will arrive in the South Bend area in stages. Residence hall staff will arrive on campus beginning Sunday, July 26 for training. International students should plan to arrive Saturday, Aug. 1 to participate in orientation with Notre Dame International. The University’s Welcome program for new graduate students will be Monday, Aug. 3 and Tuesday, Aug. 4. New students in our professional programs will receive guidance about orientation programs from their schools.

Based on public health considerations related to move-in staging and gathering size, we currently anticipate offering two Welcome programs for new first year or transfer undergraduate students and families. Those students living on campus will move in either Monday, Aug. 3 or Wednesday, Aug. 5 based on their assigned residence hall. Each student can be accompanied by no more than two family members or guests. Appointment times will be staggered to facilitate physical distancing. Students and their families can expect the same Welcome Week experience regardless of their move-in date. Following the conclusion of each Welcome program on Tuesday, Aug. 4 or Thursday, Aug. 6, student-only programming will continue through the start of classes. First year assignments are currently planned for release on Friday, July 10. I will write new undergraduate students and their parents with further details about Welcome Week in early July.

Most returning undergraduate students living on campus will move in Aug. 6, 7, 8, or 9. Returning students will have the option to select a move-in day and time using the same appointment system used for move-out during a selection period from July 6 to 13. Any students who do not select a move-in appointment during that period will have a move-in day and time assigned automatically. A very limited number of returning student leaders, international students, and student-athletes will be contacted by relevant University departments for permission to move in Aug. 1 or 2. Because the University must restrict the number of students moving in each day for public health reasons, we will be unable to accommodate individual requests for arrival on Aug. 1 or 2. Each student can be accompanied by no more than two family members or guests. Like move-out, appointment times will be staggered to facilitate physical distancing.

Living, Eating, and Praying in Community

Whether you live on campus or off, please continue to wash your hands or sanitize frequently, wear your mask when around others and practice physical distancing. These practices not only protect you, but they protect your peers, faculty, rectors, building services and dining hall staff, advisors, our South Bend and Mishawaka neighbors, and others from infection. They are also essential to minimize the number of people who would need to be quarantined in the case of
infection. All students will receive a **welcome back package** that includes a refillable hand disinfectant or sanitizer, thermometer, and at least three masks, though we also encourage you to bring extra supplies with you to campus. Additional information regarding distribution of these welcome back packages is forthcoming.

Our **undergraduate residence halls** will operate at standard occupancy, though significantly enhanced cleaning and other adjustments in our common life will be necessary to keep one another safe. While we are still finalizing several details, I can share our current plans. Building Services will now clean the halls seven days a week instead of five, and disinfect high touch surfaces multiple times a day. Assigned roommates will be considered a “household” for purposes of contact tracing. Students will not need to wear masks when they are in their assigned rooms, but they must wear masks in all other rooms and common spaces, including hallways and lounges. While non-resident students may visit friends in the residence halls, these guests must wear masks and observe physical distancing at all times and in all spaces. Hall lounge capacities will be adjusted for physical distancing. No guests may stay overnight in the halls. We hope to make shared kitchens and perhaps hall fitness rooms available through appointments or limited hours, dependent on sufficient cleaning, disinfecting, and spacing. Food sales, unfortunately, cannot be offered safely this semester, though those kitchens may be open for individual use by appointment. Residence hall laundry facilities will be free this fall as planned. Finally, our facilities team is looking into possible ways to manage temperatures inside halls that are not air-conditioned.

We believe if students follow these protocols the residence halls will be safe and healthy environments. Due in part to the cancellation of our study abroad programs, there will be alternative living arrangements available this academic year, and we will do all we can to assist those students interested in exploring these options. Pangborn Hall and Fischer Graduate Residences will now be open to undergraduates, and the safety and health protocols outlined above will apply to these residences as well. Students may also choose to move off campus this fall without incurring a housing contract penalty and still earn credit toward the residency requirement. **Please contact the Office of Residential Life by Wednesday, July 1 if you would like to explore alternative on-campus and off-campus options.**

Our partners in **Campus Dining** are adjusting their facilities and offerings in accordance with best industry food service practices. Retail outlets have revised menus to reflect Grab and Go or individually plated carryout food only. Food orders from these outlets may be placed in advance through the Grubhub app and are available for pick up. Dining halls will be available only to those campus community members with purchased meal plans. Disposable serveware will be used, self-service buffets will be replaced with individually portioned, served buffets, and dining capacity will be modified to ensure physical distancing. Outdoor dining will be available in tents on North and South quads and Grab and Go options at both dining halls will also be enhanced. As a reminder, this year we are excited to offer block plans to all students and more flexible on-campus
meal plans to upperclassmen.

Gathering together in faith communities and nurturing the spiritual life of our students remains a crucial priority consonant with our Catholic mission. The Basilica of the Sacred Heart is already open for public Masses and operating consistent with diocesan guidelines. Most daily Masses will be offered in residence halls and academic buildings, though adjusted as needed for physical distancing requirements. We are in the process of exploring alternative on-campus spaces for residence hall and Law School Sunday Masses so these faith communities can continue to worship together at a regular time.

Nurturing Your Health and Well-Being

Our world has changed radically since March. Whether you are a new or returning student, a graduate or undergraduate student, you transitioned to some form of remote instruction and likely paused academic research last spring. While you persevered admirably, this experience was isolating for many and a particular challenge for students who might have less resources available to them. Well over 100,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the United States, with hundreds of thousands more around the world. The economic fallout of the pandemic has impacted the financial situation of many students' families and created uncertainty related to summer work, internships, and future employment prospects. And, as I wrote, George Floyd’s killing reminded us of the terrible impact of racism in our country.

These are significant challenges, and we want to understand how they have impacted both your mental and physical health. The McDonald Center for Student Well-Being has created a short assessment to understand your impressions of our current environment, explore how the last few months have affected you, and identify the areas you most need help this fall. Please complete this confidential survey, ideally no later than Wednesday, July 1. The results of this survey will help the University plan the most effective services and programs to support you.

We already have a variety of services in place to nurture our students' physical and emotional well-being, and we will further enhance them this fall. As Father Jenkins indicated, every member of the University community must complete a daily self-screen. University Health Services (UHS) clinical staff will reach out to you if the results of your health screen indicate you should be assessed and tested for COVID-19. The flu vaccine will also be required of all students this fall to minimize our community’s experience with respiratory-based illness. We are finalizing COVID-19 testing plans for our campus community, but we intend to have convenient, free testing available on campus to all enrolled Notre Dame students, as well as full-time staff and faculty. Both UHS and the University Counseling Center (UCC) will offer their standard comprehensive care through in-person appointments and telehealth or teletherapy options will also be available based on students’ preferences. Within the Center for Student Support & Care, our Care
and Wellness Consultants and specialists in Sara Bea Accessibility Services are similarly available in person or virtually for students with complex needs or requests for accommodations.

With the modifications the University has made and dedicated adherence to our public health practices by students and all community members, we believe our campus will be as safe as any other environment, and the risk of acquiring the virus on campus should be very low. Nonetheless, we are prepared to care for students if they become infected with COVID-19 and therefore need to be isolated. We will similarly support students who are considered close contacts of infected individuals and therefore need to be quarantined. Adhering to our health and safety practices, especially regarding mask wearing and physical distancing, is the best way you can minimize the risk that you will become infected or be considered a close contact of an infected individual.

While off-campus students will likely complete any necessary isolation or quarantine time in their homes, University staff will check in with these patients daily, provide monitoring supplies, and ensure the students have access to a delivery service for groceries, food, and supplies. The University has contracted with three off-campus partners for quarantine or isolation space for on-campus students and has additional apartments reserved for this purpose in a separate building of Fischer Graduate Residences. These students will also be checked on daily, provided with monitoring supplies, and delivered two daily meals prepared by Campus Dining. All isolated or quarantined students will be referred to Sara Bea Accessibility Services for accommodations and classroom support, including monitoring of exams. UHS providers will follow up with students regularly and advise when they are able to return to the classroom. Finally, the University has strong partnerships in place with both local hospitals if a student’s illness becomes severe.

The University, in partnership with local public health officials, will perform contact tracing for any infected student. Our system is intended to allow contact tracers to thoroughly identify all high-risk or close contacts, conduct timely notification of contacts to prevent further transmission, ensure resources are available for appropriate medical evaluation of any contacts who are or become symptomatic, and ensure successful quarantine or isolation of contacts during the potential time frame when they may be infectious.

**Enabling Student Formation Through Facilities and Programming**

All of the facilities designed for student programs and activities will be open this fall, including the Duncan Student Center, the LaFortune Student Center, Washington Hall, Stepan Center, Rockne Memorial, the basketball courts in the North Dome, the Smith Center for Recreational Sports, and the Ricci Band Building. These facilities will implement enhanced sanitization and disinfection
protocols, will modify furniture and adjust capacities to University physical distancing requirements and may reduce operating hours to ensure deeper daily cleaning or accommodate academic classes.

Given the adjusted timing of the semester and what we have learned about transmission of the virus, we encourage you and all student groups to utilize our outdoor grounds in safe ways as much as possible. All outdoor grounds, including Ricci Fields and the West Quad Fields, can be reserved by student groups and may also be used informally by students when there is no prior reservation. In collaboration with Campus Dining, we intend to offer the tents installed on North and South quads as space that can be reserved for additional outdoor student programs or informal gathering.

Staff members in our division's offices and our partners in the Graduate School are eager to meet with students for conversation, pastoral support, and program planning. Following appropriate health practices, we will be open and available to you in person at Campus Ministry, the Center for Student Support and Care, the Family Resource Center, the Gender Relations Center, the Meruelo Family Center for Career Development, Multicultural Student Programs and Services, the McDonald Center for Student Well-Being, the Office of Community Standards, the Office of Student Enrichment, RecSports, Residential Life, Student Activities, Student Media, and the University Bands. We will also offer virtual engagement opportunities with our staff based on the preferences of students.

All student clubs and organizations will have the opportunity to meet in person in accordance with appropriate University public health practices and amended student club and organization guidelines and protocols. Student groups may also choose to meet virtually. Attendance must be taken at all in-person meetings and events to allow for contact tracing if needed. Given the University's travel policy, student group travel as well as off-campus events will not be permitted this fall. Similarly, due to limited University visitors, speakers/performers will not be permitted for in-person engagements, though they can be contracted for virtual events. These limitations on travel and visitors will likely limit students who volunteer regularly in our local community and interact with children. We will share more details as plans are finalized.

We are still developing our plans for student activities that scientists believe hold significant risk for transmission, whether due to the nature of the activity, the proximity of individuals at those events, or the inevitable contact between individuals. As of this writing, we sadly do not anticipate permitting group vocal activities indoors, student dances, or many contact club or intramural sports. We are working hard to research safe ways to enable outdoor choir rehearsals or performances, musical instrument rehearsals and performances, and dance and theater performances, though they will likely require significant restrictions. We know how much students involved in these efforts cherish their experiences and we want to offer them safely if we can.
Fitness classes and instructional programs will require adjusted attendance based on physical distancing. For those interhall sports we are able to offer, rosters will be open to both current and former hall residents this year given that some study abroad students may be unable to return to their home residence halls. We are consulting the University’s medical experts, relevant CDC guidelines, and relevant professional association guidelines regularly, and we will publish a full set of student club and organization guidelines and protocols throughout the summer and upon your return. While these changes will present constraints, we look forward to working with you to imagine new ways to enrich our campus life.

Preparing You Well for Fall

This is a lot of information to digest, and I realize some items require significant and sometimes painful changes to ways we interacted on campus prior to the pandemic. I hope you will approach these modifications by remembering that they will allow us to be here safely on campus, learning and connecting with one another in person and at the place we love. Together, I know we can remain healthy, support each other during these challenging times and create new ways to build community.

While I will write to you periodically this summer, please consult the University’s website regularly for updates as our plans continue to evolve. You can also contact the Office of Student Affairs with questions. We will reply as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your patience as we continue to finalize our preparations for your return. Finally, Vice President and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs Hugh Page, Vice President, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Laura Carlson, and I will also be inviting elected undergraduate and graduate student leaders to several virtual meetings between now and the beginning of the semester so we can better understand student questions and concerns and share updates on the University’s plans.

Let me conclude where I began, which is with sincere excitement for your return to us. We are working tirelessly to prepare for a healthy and fulfilling fall semester. Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones and stay well this summer.

In Notre Dame,

Erin Hoffmann Harding
Vice President for Student Affairs

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