



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

April 22, 2020

Dear Franklin Pierce Parents and Students,

Who could have predicted the singular impact of COVID-19 on our daily lives over the past month? The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and their families continues to be foremost on our minds as we work to address the fast-changing circumstances associated with the pandemic and ensure that our students complete the spring semester.

While one staff member tested positive for COVID-19, please be assured that they were away from campus and did not return after being exposed. We also continue to adhere rigorously to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines in assessing the situation and safeguarding the well-being of the small number of students who remain on campus in Rindge because they could not travel home, in large part due to restrictions on international travel.

The purpose of this message is to update you on some of the important decisions Franklin Pierce's senior leadership made in recent weeks. When possible, we have worked to include the perspective of students in that process, prior to communicating those decisions to them through a number of channels.

- **Remote learning:** We are pleased to report that the transition to remote learning, while not perfect, went exceptionally well. The University has offered hundreds of graduate and undergraduate courses online for more than a decade, so we are experienced at creating them; however, the task of transitioning an entire spring curriculum to remote learning in two weeks was something we would not have thought possible.

Our faculty approached this significant endeavor with their characteristic dedication, following best practices to create remote courses that provide students with the quality of education they have come to expect from Franklin Pierce while ensuring that their academic progress proceeds without interruption. We will of course monitor the results.

Please know though that some students will struggle with online instruction. Faculty are working closely with those in their classes, but parents, please let us know if your student is experiencing any difficulty so we can work with them. You can contact one of the college deans:

Dr. Maria Altobello, Dean, College of Health & Natural Sciences (603) 899-1140, altobellom@franklinpierce.edu

Dr. Norm Faiola, Dean, College of Business
(603) 899-4157, faiolan@franklinpierce.edu

Dr. Matthew Konieczka, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
(603) 899-4356, konieczkam@franklinpierce.edu

Dr. Sarah Dangelantonio, Executive Dean for Assessment and Academic Affairs
(603) 899-1130, Dangelst@franklinpierce.edu
(if not sure what college your student is in)

- **Credit for unused Room and Board:** Nearly all our students receive financial aid and the unprecedented economic situation we now face is understandably a source of anxiety for many students and their families. Because each student and family finances their Franklin Pierce University education with their personal financial aid counselor, the process for determining eligibility for credits must also be done individually to ensure that we comply with federal and state guidelines and not inadvertently jeopardize any student's financial aid eligibility.

Performing an individual account analysis for 1,400 students is an in-depth and time-consuming process. Our Student Financial Services office is hard at work with the goal of completing a full review by April 30. Eligible seniors will be given a refund on unused room and meal plans, and returning students will be issued a credit as part of their fall 2020 financial aid awards. Please note, that while we always invite you to contact Student Financial Services with questions, completing the analysis for all of our students is our first priority. We ask for your flexibility until its completion at the end of the month.

- **Retrieval of belongings from campus:** When students left Rindge for spring break, no one knew they would not be able to return to campus later, as scheduled. Understandably, this created a significant inconvenience for many, but it's imperative that we abide by federal and state guidelines – including Governor Sununu's stay-at-home order. As you can imagine, having 1,400 students return to campus, many from
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COVID-19 hot spots, is exactly what no one wants.

Our plan is to have small numbers of students come to campus to gather their things in two-hour windows between May 5 and May 10. Students received details on how to sign up in late March. This staggered approach will enable us to ensure that we adhere to social distancing guidelines. Should your student be unable to return to campus at that time, we will work with them to make sure their belongings are sent home or stored on campus. If the governor's stay-at-home order is extended or having any students return to Rindge is not prudent, we will change our plans accordingly.

- **Commencement:** One of the most difficult decisions we made was to postpone this year's commencement ceremonies. The members of the class of 2020 arrived on campus the very same month I became president of Franklin Pierce University. Over the past four years, I've been in awe of their optimism, compassion, talent and humor. It grieves me to see the celebration they worked so hard to earn curtailed.

Prior to making this decision, Dean of Student Affairs Andrew Pollom and I met online with the senior class leaders. While it was clear we would no longer be able to hold our commencement as originally scheduled, we all agreed we do not want to cancel it. Instead, we decided to reschedule it.

After that meeting, we invited the senior class to join us on Zoom to discuss our decision. Our plan, if it's safe to do so, is to hold a condensed commencement, probably later in the summer. We will of course work to provide an alternative if a ceremony this summer is not possible or prudent. Our students are behind this approach, but they are rightfully concerned first and foremost about the well-being of their classmates and loved ones. Details on the ceremony will be forthcoming and posted on our website as soon as possible.

- **University Employees:** On Tuesday, March 17, the University announced its plan to have all employees, except essential workers, begin working remotely for a two-week period. We also indicated that all of our employees, whether their responsibilities allowed them to work remotely or not or whether their work could be maintained at a full-time level, would continue to receive their salaries and benefits through this time. Shortly after that, New Hampshire Governor, Chris Sununu announced the state's stay-at-home order through May 4.

Without a student or faculty/staff population present or any activities or events on campus or at our centers, the daily operational needs of the University have dramatically changed. This past week, like those at many businesses in our region and colleges and universities nationwide, I had to make the very painful decision to temporarily furlough some full-time employees and reduce the hours of others. We look forward to our colleagues returning to Franklin Pierce as our operations return to pre-COVID-19 levels.

The onus on my office and the senior administrative team to address the COVID-19 financial impact of the University's finances is our daily focus. Despite not knowing when our main

campus and centers may reopen, our goals are to continue to educate and support our graduate and undergraduate students at the level of quality and excellence they have consistently received from Franklin Pierce and to be ready for them when we can welcome them back to the University.

I also want to personally thank you and your family for your patience and understanding during this difficult time. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the education of your student and to oversee their growth as a member of Raven Nation. I will be informing you of a number of important planning initiatives in the coming weeks as we navigate these unprecedented times together. . If you have any questions about student life that I have not addressed here, please do not hesitate to contact Dean Andrew Pollom at polloma@franklinperce.edu.

Be safe and be well,

Kim Mooney
