June 15, 2020: Reopening

Dear Faculty,

As President Marrero and I have outlined in previous messages, the university has begun its phased approach to reopening. The COVID-19 situation remains fluid and plans may need to be adjusted, but I want to reiterate the guiding principles and constraints we’re working under as we begin our return to campus.

Our guiding principles throughout this process include providing a high-quality education; ensuring minimal disruption to students’ schedules; and meeting all social distancing guidelines established by the CDC, GDPH, and USG. We will do all we can within those guidelines to facilitate a safe and healthy environment, including working with colleges and departments on messaging to students that encourage them to wear cloth face coverings, and explain the importance of doing so.

As we implement our reopening plan, there are some constraints that we want you to be aware of ahead of time. Currently, we are planning to reopen in the fall with as much face-to-face instruction as possible, with social distancing. We also will have plans in place to move quickly to online instruction based on COVID-19, CDC, GDPH, and USG input. To maintain social distancing in classrooms, the seating capacities in most rooms will need to be reduced significantly. Social distancing will also need to be observed in common areas (i.e. hallways and lobbies). Additionally, as I mentioned, the wearing of face coverings is going to be strongly, strongly encouraged. Face coverings will be provided to students as they return to campus and to faculty and staff in the coming weeks. Face coverings will also be available in the bookstore for purchase.

When it comes to classroom instruction, almost all courses will have to change delivery to some extent, from traditional face-to-face instruction to hybrid or modified face-to-face.

Activation and population of your Folio accounts is critically important for continuity of instruction under many potential scenarios. We want to make sure that instruction can continue if a faculty member has an accommodation to teach remotely, if a faculty member must quarantine for any reason, if students must quarantine for any reason, and in the event we see a resurgence of the virus. So, please work on uploading course content to your Folio accounts before the fall term begins.

If you are in an at-risk category as defined by the Centers for Disease Control, you may request a temporary accommodation through Georgia Southern University’s Human Resources. In order to request an accommodation, complete the ADA Accommodation Request Form and submit it to hrservice@georgiasouthern.edu. Employees are not required to disclose medical information to supervisors. This information is maintained within Human Resources.

Please try to have these requests in as soon as possible. Submitting these by July 8, 2020, will help to develop instructional options for faculty and schedules for students. You can submit requests at any time to HR throughout the year if your situation changes.

Please understand that this is a request and may not result in a remote work arrangement. Departments will consider all options that may meet your needs, including the safety measures already being taken on campus.

Thank you for all you are doing to help us embrace this new normal.

Sincerely,

Carl L. Reiber
Provost & Vice President Academic Affairs

Last updated: 8/18/2021