



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 27, 2020

Dear BMC Community,

Week One of online-only is almost behind us. It was undoubtedly a week of many firsts as we taught and learned in new ways, interacted in new ways, conducted meetings in new ways, and even worshipped in new ways. While we long for the old ways, let's acknowledge that even in the midst of "forced change" we can perhaps find methods and strategies that work so well that we just might keep them in our repertoire after the pandemic subsides.

Kudos to our faculty who have labored so diligently and so quickly to convert classes into an online format. Kudos to our staff and coaches for transferring their on-campus work into at-home work as we are now in a period of work-from-home. Kudos to our students for applying themselves to their studies from a distance—you are greatly missed, greatly loved, and greatly prayed for.

I offer a special word of thanks to our IT staff for their tireless and patient efforts to support us all in this transition time. You've enabled us to stay on task, and we are grateful.

Allow me to summarize briefly the major developments of the week we are now concluding.

1. On Monday, March 23, we began online instruction in all classes.
2. On Wednesday, March 25, we received details regarding the first stimulus package, specifically details regarding how higher education will be supported. Of the \$14 billion allocated for support of higher ed, 17% is designated for private institutions. Some of these funds will come as direct support for students and institutions to relieve financial stress created by the pandemic. Other portions will be used to fund loans to small businesses with fewer than 500 employees. BMC will qualify for this funding. For these provisions and others included in the package, we are immensely grateful.
3. Also, on Wednesday we announced that the campus would be closed to visitors until further notice.
4. On Thursday, March 26, the Executive Committee and the Finance/Administration Committee of our Board of Trustees conducted their April meeting by video conference.
5. Also on Thursday, employees began working from home, reporting to campus on an as-needed basis.

During the course of this unusual week significant progress was also made on resolving two important issues that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

First, a Graduation Task Team was formed to identify the best means by which to celebrate the Class of 2020. At this point, we have refrained from cancelling the commencement service scheduled for May 9. The Graduation Task Team is studying a variety of formats that would allow us to celebrate on that day while observing both social distancing and the "under ten person" rule for gatherings. The team, which includes Dr. Enzor, Dean Ritchey, Tommy Peters, Sheila Freeman, and Kayce Bragg, will be seeking input from prospective graduates regarding your preferences for this celebration,

including options for later dates if needed. Seniors, watch your email in the next few days for an important survey.

Second, our Board's Executive Committee has articulated a response to a frequently asked question by students: Will I receive a refund for room and board if I elected not to return to campus? The answer is yes--while other institutions are electing not to make refunds under these extreme circumstances, we recognize the financial challenges many of our students are now facing. We plan to do our best to provide prorated refunds for room/board to students who are eligible. These refunds will be proportional to a student's out-of-pocket room/board expense. No refunds will be given to students whose room/board expenses were covered by some form of scholarship/financial aid.

Although this means that the College must absorb the expense of operations, BMC is still planning to assist eligible students in some way. We will not, however, be able to answer questions regarding eligibility, amount, or timing until we have completed our study of available resources. When this study is complete, we will post an update. We ask for your patience as we strive to complete this complex task.

In closing, I'm reminded of the old television commercial in which the motel's spokesperson assured us that they would "leave the light on for us." Rest assured, the light is on at BMC, awaiting the day when we are together once more.

#FaithTOPPSFear  
#toppertenacity  
#BMCtogether

Sincerely,



Barbara C. McMillin  
President