April 10, 2020

TO: Faculty

FROM: Teresa A. Sullivan
Interim Provost
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

First, let me thank all of you for the initiative, grit, and hard work that the past month has brought. You have done a magnificent job and your work has been noticed.

The Governor’s executive order yesterday extended Michigan’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order through April 30. The precautions we have already asked of you remain in effect.

I have several updates from this past week to share with you.

**Fall Admissions.** I am pleased to tell you that our undergraduate applications for admission have reached a new high (over 45,000) and that the total enrollment deposits and the out-of-state deposits to date have also set records. We are up in deposits from every group except international students. (Given the difficulties of testing, travel, and obtaining visas, we were expecting this decline.) John Gaboury in my office, Director of Admissions John Ambrose, and the entire staff have pivoted to a very different style of recruiting, and so far the results look very good. But of course, the perception by students and faculty that MSU will provide them with a great education is the most important influence on admitted students’ decisions, and that perception is heavily shaped by the experiences you are providing.

Many of you have probably noticed that your courses now have unexpected auditors in the form of interested parents, siblings, and a few dogs and cats—and they like what they see.

**Summer Online.** Last week MSU announced that it would be converting all in-person courses offered during Summer 2020 Full Session and Session One into online courses. This week President Stanley and I decided to move all of MSU’s summer courses online, including those held during Session Two. This change does not affect clinical courses in the health science colleges.

Given the challenges our students face because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have learned that many students are seeking increased opportunities to take online courses this summer. In response to our students’ needs, MSU is offering a larger number of online courses in both first and second summer sessions this year. Courses will be added to the summer schedule over the next week. We are particularly interested in offering high-demand undergraduate courses. The Associate Deans of your colleges and Associate Provosts Mark Largent and Jeff Grabill have been working on expanding our summer offerings.

**Zoom Best Practices.** The Keep Teaching site has added information about Zoom Best Practices. Visit the site to learn more about moderating meetings, preparing for meetings, meeting behavior, and for additional resources from Zoom. We need to prevent “Zoombombing,” which is the malicious effort to hack your classroom with racist or pornographic images.
**OISS COVID-19 Information webpage.** The Office for International Students and Scholars has created a webpage that provides [COVID-19 information for international students, scholars, faculty, and staff](#). Please consult the page to learn more about the wide range of resources they provide, including online advising; Immigration FAQs for F1, J1, and H1B Visa Holders; Financial Assistance; and more. Our online instruction is an important attraction for helping international students continue their MSU educational careers.

**CARES Act.** Congress has provided funding for colleges and universities to use as student aid in recognition of the disruption caused by COVID-19. Yesterday the U.S. Department of Education announced that it would be sending the money immediately. The MSU allocation is around $15 million and Financial Aid Director Rick Shipman is developing priorities for how this money will be distributed. I regret that the need is much greater than the funds provided, but they are a welcome supplement for our students.

**Virtual Graduation.** I am working with a small committee to design a virtual event to recognize the Class of 2020. Surely not since World War II has a graduating class experienced four years of ups and downs in the way this class has, and we need to recognize their resilience and perseverance. This event will be University-wide, and some colleges are also planning for graduation or recognition ceremonies of various sorts. This virtual ceremony will not preclude our graduates’ participation in a future in-person graduation ceremony, but the details of that future event have not yet been worked out. I will keep you informed as details emerge.

Thank you for all you continue to do in support of our teaching, research, and outreach missions during this challenging time.