

COVID-19 Update: 03-18-2020

Good evening Stone Academy Community,

There are just a few quick updates from today that I would like to communicate. The first is surrounding our transition to distance education and the second is about our progress with clinical experiences.

#### Theory Coursework

In an effort to ensure that the transition to that Blackboard platform is entirely prepared to begin resuming theory courses for students, we have delayed the resumption date until Friday, March 20, 2020. Tomorrow we will begin testing the platform and, on Friday, faculty will begin having access to the courses. For students, this means that you will not begin accessing your Blackboard courses until Monday, March 23, 2020. Guidance for students that do not have access to the necessary technology will be addressed individually over the next two days.

Our Provost, Linda Dahlin, has been working tirelessly through the nights and weekend to make this transition happen along with our entire academic management team and faculty. It is a colossal job to get over 1,000 students online and I want to recognize their efforts and sacrifice.

#### Clinical Coursework

Today we made significant headway on the development of our plan to address clinical coursework during the COVID-19 crisis. I expect to have a significant update in my communication tomorrow but I can tell you that it does appear that we will be able to hold true to my statement on March 11, 2020. I continue to see a path where students will not have any delay to their graduation dates and faculty will not experience any employment interruptions. This is all developing in real time so I will make sure to keep everyone posted on our progress, in the meantime, all clinical faculty will continue to be compensated for all previously scheduled clinical hours through Saturday, March 21, 2020.

I would like to close by telling you how impressed I continue to be by all of our students and faculty. This is an extremely disruptive situation that has turned all of our lives upside down yet, through it all, each of you have been so extremely kind, patient, and accommodating. I consider it a true honor to be able to consider myself a colleague to each of you.

Thank you for all of your supportive emails and insightful perspectives, we have begun to master the situation and it is a credit to each and every one of you.

Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Bierbaum  
President