



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY FALL 2020 UPDATES

May 28, 2020

Letter to the campus community regarding fall 2020 updates

Dear Shockers:

I hope this finds you and your families healthy and safe and enjoying a bit of rest and relaxation after the end of the spring semester. Despite the unprecedented challenges our university has faced over these past three months, I am reminded daily of the incredible spirit, kindness and resilience of our entire Shocker community.

While the summer months will allow us a few moments to pause and collect our thoughts, we continue our diligent efforts to prepare to welcome students, faculty and staff back to campus in the fall. Our campus re-integration working groups are working daily to implement our campus reopening plans. Our top priority remains the health, safety and well-being of our entire campus community as we strive to maintain goals of educational excellence, research and innovation.

I write today to provide you some updates to our plans for the fall.

FALL AND THANKSGIVING BREAKS

The length of the fall semester will remain unchanged, beginning Aug. 17 and ending Dec. 10; however, we have made two adjustments to previously scheduled breaks:

First, we have canceled the two-day Fall Break. As we do not know what the COVID landscape will look like in the fall, we do not want to risk increased campus exposure as possibly thousands of faculty, staff and students return to campus after potential out-of-state travel.

We are using the two days of Fall Break to accelerate Thanksgiving Break, which will now begin Monday, Nov. 23. This means that all in-person instruction will be completed by Friday, Nov. 20.

Students will **not** return to campus after Thanksgiving and will instead complete the semester, including the remaining four days of instruction, and study periods and final

exams, remotely. Instructors wishing to complete in-person assessments must do so prior to Nov. 20.

PROPOSED TUITION INCREASE

In addition to our health and safety efforts, we continue to monitor the significant financial impact this pandemic has had on our institution. These uncertain times have required us – and will continue to require us – to take thoughtful precautions and make difficult decisions to ensure Wichita State’s future success. We continue to brace for the financial impact caused by a reduction in state revenues from the loss of business activity and an anticipated reduction in enrollment.

You have heard previously about our implemented temporary cost-saving measures: a hiring freeze and restrictions on discretionary spending including travel and non-essential purchase. In addition to these measures, we have also implemented the following:

- All requests to hire employees now go through a position review process. Voluntary temporary furlough of academic deans and temporary reduction in salaries of university executives and athletic coaching staff, a measure that will generate approximately \$100,000 in budgetary savings.
- A 2% General Use (GU) budget reduction for FY 2021 for all divisions, a measure that will generate approximately \$2.6 million budgetary savings.
- \$2.5 million in savings from travel and discretionary spending.

We continue to explore all possible means of cutting costs.

That being said, we know now that these cost-saving measures will not be enough and unfortunately, we find ourselves, like several other Kansas universities, left with looking at our tuition revenue for assistance.

I am therefore proposing to the Kansas Board of Regents a 2% tuition increase for the 2020-2021 academic year. This will result in an approximate increase of \$67 per student, per semester. I understand that this is difficult news. Please be assured that the decision to make this recommendation was not done without significant conversation with the Division of Finance and Administration, the university budget advisory committee and students. It was also not done without exploring many or other possible alternatives and the impact on our students.

I take very seriously our commitment to providing an outstanding education and educational experience at an affordable price. While we are not able to hold tuition flat for the 2020-2021 academic year, we continue to be the most affordable research university within the state of Kansas and one of the most affordable research institutions when compared with others across the nation. This small increase will enable us to continue our mission of being an essential educational, cultural and economic driver for Kansas and the greater public good.

PRORATED HOUSING FEES

Students will only be charged for housing through the campus shutdown date of Nov. 20, unless a student chooses to stay after Nov. 20. Those who stay in student housing after Nov. 20 will be charged a daily rate.

NO INCREASE IN STUDENT FEES AND COMMITMENT TO FINANCIAL AID

Understanding the potential impact of a proposed tuition increase, there will be no mandatory student fee increases for the 2020-2021 academic year. There will also be no additional fees for hybrid courses.

Wichita State continues to offer multiple avenues for student financial assistance. The university has distributed more than \$4.2 million in CARES Act funding to more than 4,400 students.

While CARES Act funding was only available to those students eligible for Title IV financial aid, the university recognized that there are other members of our campus community, including our international students, undocumented students and students enrolled in distance-only degree programs who may need financial assistance. To that end, the WSU Foundation established the Shockers UP COVID-19 Emergency Fund to help those students in need.

As always, we will continue to keep you updated on our plans for the fall. In the meantime, my most sincere gratitude for your patience, flexibility, grace and commitment to Wichita State University.

Be well,
Dr. Jay S. Golden,
President, Wichita State

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