



**STAY AT HOME EDITION**

## First Tuesday

A MONTHLY MESSAGE  
FROM WICHITA STATE  
PRESIDENT JAY GOLDEN

May 2020 - A newsletter for the campus community

### Shockers United as Wichita State plans to gradually reopen

While the university has continued operating during the pandemic, we are working toward a gradual re-opening of the campus for faculty and staff that will likely begin on May 26, 2020. The university is currently evaluating a number of recommendations from task forces and constituency groups for a reintegration plan that preserves the health and safety of its faculty and staff, and is consistent with the governor’s recently announced [Plan to Reopen Kansas](#).

Our Provost, Dr. Richard Muma, formed seven work groups to develop and implement Shockers United strategies to ensure we continue to provide a safe and healthy campus when employees and, eventually students and visitors, return.

#### Here are some highlights:

1. We are working on a plan to begin reopening the campus beginning May 26. This does not mean, however, that all employees will be expected to return to work. During the summer term, departments should look for ways to stagger work schedules and to continue to allow employees to work remotely to mitigate this pandemic unless it is essential that they report to campus. Each department’s business hours and remote work schedule may look different depending on the demands of the department and the needs of the employees in that department.

2. When on campus, there will be a strong emphasis on each person taking responsibility to protect themselves and others from the Coronavirus infection. That means daily wellness self-checks, social distancing, limited congregation, wearing face coverings (or masks as appropriate), disinfecting spaces and limiting non-essential travel.

3. All faculty will design flexibility into fall semester course delivery (e.g., hybrid, online, modified schedule) to limit disruption and assure quality learning outcomes if another stay-at-home period is needed.

4. Continued support for students will include increased availability of grants, scholarships and campus employment opportunities.

5. Students and their advisors will stay connected, to keep students on path to graduation and understanding financial needs to graduate with the least possible debt.

6. University research activity and space will be secured and appropriately functioning in line with health and safety guidelines.

7. The university will work with its Innovation Campus partners in an effort to coordinate reopening plans.

There are many details being worked out but it's apparent there are going to be new ways that we will be operating the campus and delivering on-campus education.

If we can do so safely, **we will welcome our students back to campus in August** and offer in-person education for the fall semester.

### **COVID-19 IMPACTS TO OUR BUDGET**

The economy of our country and state, and all those who live in our region, have been hit hard by the pandemic. Wichita State University is no different. We are currently projecting a \$6.8 million budget shortfall for the new fiscal year beginning July 1. This is from anticipated lower enrollment, especially of international students, who represent about 10% of our student population.

This does not include financial impacts to our athletics department, student life and other lost revenue streams, nor does it include the millions of dollars we refunded to our students and families for housing, dining and parking during this spring semester.

While we face these challenges, our top priorities are to ensure that we continue to deliver the most impactful possible student experience, minimize impacts to our faculty and staff and continue to partner with our community as we work together for the economic recovery of our region.

### **So, our initial efforts to address the budget gap include:**

- Campus wide hiring freeze, with rare exceptions
- Executive leadership furloughs or equivalent salary reduction, for the President, President's Executive Team, Deans, Athletics senior administration and coaches
- Halting discretionary spending
- An initial across-the-board 2% budget reduction
- Examining additional mitigation steps

We will continue to monitor the situation. The biggest impact to our students and families will be if there is a state budget cut to higher education. That would necessitate further mitigation strategies.

The Kansas Board of Regents has been in communication with Gov. Kelly and has requested support from the governor from the federal CARES Act, which allocates money to the governor under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund. This in addition to a portion of the appropriation to be used by state agencies for their coronavirus response and would help stabilize our Kansas institutions of higher education.

Let us hope that the economy rebounds in the near-term, as we begin to open up the state.

### **SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS**

This is a personal request from me. This week we have started to distribute to our eligible students the \$4.4M in CARES stimulus funding just received from the federal government. Over 2,800 Pell-eligible students will immediately receive \$1,000 for unforeseen emergency expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19.

Our Financial Aid office is working with additional eligible students who also have financial needs and will process their applications soon.

However, this is not enough! We expect to exhaust these funds rapidly!

Many of our students, including our international students and undocumented students, do not qualify for this federal stimulus and are in dire need of financial aid for basic items such as food, health insurance, rent etc.

That is why my wife and I recently made the decision to contribute 10% of my salary automatically to our Wichita State University Foundation to support the WSU COVID-19 Emergency Fund for our students.

I ask that if you can, please consider joining Dina and I by donating to this important fund to **support our students in need**. To learn more go to: <https://foundation.wichita.edu/shockersup>



*Jay Golden, Wichita State President*

## **University Survey**

### **All invited to take survey to assess university opportunities**

Wichita State's Office of Strategic Communications -- in conjunction with the Public Policy and Management Center - have created a survey intended to provide Wichita State leaders with guidance for resuming full activities at the university, when it is safe to do so.

Your opinions will help us understand how the university was thought of before normal life was upended by the virus, and what to prioritize. We want everyone to find value in Wichita State and feel welcome here.

You can take the survey at <https://wsu.news/survey>. A Spanish-language version of the survey is coming soon.

## New commencement options for graduating students



### **Wichita State will honor graduates through virtual May ceremony and in-person celebration in the fall**

The May graduating seniors and graduate students are a special graduating class. During these difficult times, Wichita State University acknowledges they won't have the traditional commencement opportunity due to the events affecting our nation. The university wants to honor their hard work, dedication and commitment.

For our seniors and graduate students, graduation is a time to reflect on your higher education and look toward the future. It's a time of celebration with those closest to them and the faculty and staff who helped get them to this moment. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the traditional in-person May ceremony because of the dangers related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

So instead, the university will hold a virtual commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 16, 2020 starting at 9 a.m. The virtual celebration link will post on the [commencement web page](#). The virtual format will allow us to safely celebrate the spring and summer graduates on their original commencement date during this time of social distancing. The celebration will feature pre-recorded remarks from the university president, provost, deans and the WSU Alumni Association, as well as personalized slides of each participating graduate.

But the university also recognize that walking during your graduation is one of the most special parts. So on Saturday, Oct. 10, the university will hold a special graduation ceremony for all those who completed their degrees in May. The university wants to recognize everything they've done and celebrate with family and friends present. As long as it's safe to do so, Wichita State will celebrate alongside you.

Those who cannot make the October ceremony are also welcome to participate in the December ceremony.

## In the news at Wichita State

### **Ad Astra Coalition created to help in the fight against COVID-19**

A coalition of businesses and government partners, the Ad Astra Coalition has joined together to answer some of the challenges being created in Wichita and Kansas by the COVID-19 pandemic. The coalition is co-led by Airbus Americas Engineering, Spirit AeroSystems, Textron Aviation, Wichita State University and WSU Tech.

The coalition is a two-phased approach.

For phase one, the coalition will focus on creating and distributing critical personal protective equipment for medical and community first responders.

The second phase will focus on the recovery efforts after the pandemic subsides. The coalition will seek to aid the people of Sedgwick County and south-central Kansas as these communities resume their daily activities.

[Read more about the Ad Astra Coalition](#)

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### **USA Today story highlights WSU's role in creating personal protective equipment**

Wichita State has played an integral role as the community deals with a growing number of COVID-19 cases. That work has not gone unnoticed.

A recent story in USA Today highlighted some of what WSU is doing to help flatten the curve.

[Check the story out here](#)

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