Urgent: Important New Details for Students

Monday, March 16, 2020

Dear Students,

As you know, Dean Charles Kenyon wrote last night to inform you that any students who are still in College housing need to depart campus immediately. This is not an easy decision, but one we have made in the best interests of students and our entire campus community.

Wells College vans will be available throughout this week to transport students to local airports and train stations. Please contact Ray Lupo at transportation@wells.edu to make transportation requests.

Please read the following important information very carefully:

- If you have any extenuating circumstances that you feel may qualify you to remain on campus, please fill out this online form by Wednesday, March 18, at noon (EDT). We recognize that some students may not be able to afford transportation, may have a personal situation that prevents them from returning home, or have other needs.

- Students do NOT need to take all of their belongings with them at this time, although you should be prepared to take any essential items you might need during the next several weeks, including books and course materials, medications, personal hygiene items, clothing and so forth. (Please note that incorrect information is circulating claiming that locks on student residence halls have been changed; at this time, there are no plans to change locks, and students still have the same level of access to residence halls as before.)

- If you have already departed campus, please do not return to campus at this time. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances and wish to request permission to return, please fill out the online form. We are working on arrangements to mail back critical items (such as laptops, course materials, or medications) in the event that you are unable to return to campus.

- Plan on resuming your course instruction by next Monday, March 23. Faculty are hard at work planning their revised instructing methods and syllabi, and will be in touch directly soon. We are well aware that many courses—such as acting classes, science labs, physical education to name a few—have significant hurdles to consider as we all adapt to a remote-learning format. We are working hard to solve these challenges as soon as we can and with the goal that you will be able to earn academic credit for all of your current courses.

- If you have a work-study position or other campus job, please contact your supervisor and/or the Center for Academic and Career Advising as soon as possible. Please note
that having such a position on campus is not a valid reason to remain longer on campus than absolutely necessary.

- **We are working on ways to forward mail and packages that have already been delivered to our campus mailroom.** Students can choose to temporarily forward mail (for a minimum of 15 days and maximum of 6 months) by filling out this form on the U.S. Postal Service’s website. If you are still on campus, please make sure to check your campus mailbox before you leave. If you are expecting a Wells paycheck, it will be mailed to you if it is not picked up in person before you leave, and sent to the legal address that you provided when you were initially hired for that position.

- **Our dining services staff are prepared to continue to serve meals in the dining hall to students through this Friday.** Please note that service hours or offerings may be changed or limited without advance notice. The Well (in Sommer Center) is closed until further notice.

- Please note that the College has waived the deadline for the $200 re-enrollment deposit for next year. If you have already paid the deposit, it will be applied to your fall bill. We are continuing to evaluate billing and financial policies in light of the situation and will have additional information to share in the coming days.

- **We are also working with the Community Medical Center to offer limited counseling by phone and videoconference to students** for the remainder of the spring semester, wherever they may be located. We hope to provide additional details within the next 24 hours.

In the last few days, our local county, New York state and the U.S. government have all officially declared states of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we are concerned that government authorities may soon put into place even more restrictive measures that would prohibit travel, business operations, or other activities. In fact, the governors of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut just announced that all restaurants, bars, movie theaters and gyms must shut down by 8 p.m. tonight and remain closed until further notice.

Wells College’s crisis response team will continue to meet regularly to work out additional logistics. I encourage you to bookmark wells.edu/covid-19-updates to stay on top of additional announcements in the coming days and weeks. We are a small community and have a tradition of supporting each other through times both good and bad. Please continue to look out for each other, ask for help if you need it, and act in the best interests of both yourself and those around you.

Jonathan Gibralter
President