March 26, 2020

Dear Students:

As we approach the end of our first week of remote instruction, I want to pause for a moment to say: thank you. This has been an extraordinary couple of weeks and you have all managed it with patience and understanding, for which we are extremely grateful. In this letter, I want to share with you, our students, the same information I am sharing with our faculty and staff.

I hope that you, your families and friends are well at this difficult time. Of course, the question on the minds of every student and every college and university nationwide is how they will navigate the seemingly endless challenges presented by the coronavirus situation. I want you to know that my Cabinet colleagues and I are working together and with our teams on a daily basis—not just to plan our day-to-day handling of this crisis and ways to support your success, but also to continue our long-range planning for the College’s future.

Many have also asked about upcoming major events and the status of refunds. At this moment, we do not yet have a decision regarding the status of Commencement; it appears likely that a return to normal will not occur by May 16, requiring Commencement to either be rescheduled or canceled. We are asking you to be patient as we fully investigate the options available to us.

In the same vein, we are working on determining the best way to provide a prorated refund for room and board costs. Please understand that whatever method or calculation is used to determine these refunds potentially could have unforeseen implications for federal financial aid programs. We are working as fast as we can to finalize these refunds, and hope to be in touch with you within the next week. Once again, we are asking for your patience as this process has to be completed on an individual basis for each student.

In consultation with the Collegiate Cabinet, our staff in Student Affairs will be reaching out to connect with you and other students using video conference technology. These tools will allow us to speak with one another, share our experiences and answer your questions. I also want you to be aware of the change in policy regarding pass/fail grades which was made to accommodate student concerns; the details are contained in the message you received yesterday from Paul Applebee, the College’s registrar.

In the meantime, we encourage you to support each other in staying connected to your learning and your Wells family. Wells is known for its spirit of community and its commitment to individualized
learning, and I am proud that all of you have helped make this unexpected transition be as successful as possible.

I promise to keep you informed in the days and weeks ahead. In the meantime, I want you again to know how grateful I am to be part of the Wells family, and how much I appreciate your cooperation in the difficult transition to remote learning. I am saddened that you have been deprived of the remainder of the spring semester on our campus, but I promise that we will all celebrate together when we are able to see each other again in person.

Jonathan Gibralter
President