

Hello College Students,

This is Dean Paul Sniegowski speaking to you from my family home in Media, PA, where we, like all of you, are doing our best to practice social distancing amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

I'm reaching out to get in touch with you all again as we resume our semester via remote teaching and learning. I know how profoundly upsetting the situation we find ourselves in is for you, as it is for all of us who are your teachers and advisors here at Penn. Truly, none of us has lived through anything like this before!

I want you to know that faculty, staff and administration here have all been working hard over the past two weeks to coordinate the resumption of your classes this spring by remote teaching on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are all aware of the challenge we face—as I'm sure you are, too—but I have seen a real spirit of optimism among our instructors that I think you will experience in the coming days as classes resume.

I hope that my remarks here will help you gain a sense of calm amid the uncertainty of this time and will reassure you that there is still a caring community of instructors, mentors and advisors here for you. I also want to provide you with some guidance and updates as the semester resumes.

By now, you should have heard from each of your instructors as to how they will approach teaching remotely. Many instructors have also asked every student in their class to get in touch personally with them. If you haven't yet heard from an instructor for one or more of your courses and have serious concerns about whether their remote learning approach will work for you, please do get in touch with your instructor about this.

And if you are concerned about your ability to connect to the internet adequately or about anything else that might keep you from being able to participate effectively in remote learning, please let your instructors know about this and also send an email to your College Contact advisor. You can find the name and email address of your College Contact advisor on your individual PIT site.

As I am sure you know, the University has adopted a special P/F policy on courses for this semester. Under this policy, you can elect to take any courses this semester P/F, including courses fulfilling major and minor requirements and all aspects of the general requirement. The number of courses you can take P/F this semester is unlimited, and courses taken P/F this semester will not count toward the total number of P/F courses allowed during your years here in the College. The deadline for choosing to take courses P/F is April 13<sup>th</sup>.

You'll want to do some careful thinking about your P/F choices this semester. It will be a very good idea to discuss these choices with your pre-major advisor or major advisor and other mentors here before deciding what to do. As always, you should feel free to reach out to your College Contact advisor for help, too.

The College Office and I have been working closely with Departments and Programs to get ready for the transition to remote teaching and learning. We all know that the first week back in session is going to be a time of adjustment and some uncertainty as we all find the best ways to make remote teaching and learning work. We've asked your instructors to spend some time this first week back reviewing material from before the extended spring break, to consider postponing or canceling major assessments (like midterms and big papers) that were originally due right after spring break, to anticipate the anxiety that their students are feeling these days, and to stay in close touch with students about what is and is not working in the remote format.

I know I can trust all of you to be patient and forgiving of your instructors as we all get used to remote teaching and learning; but I would also ask you to let the College and me know if you think something is really not working in one of your courses.

Every indication that we see in the modelling of this COVID-19 outbreak suggests that its peak is still many weeks away here on the US East Coast. So we are all in this together for the long haul this semester. I know that, like me, you are all missing the close contact with personal friends we all took for granted just two weeks ago. I hear about this from my own son, who has returned home in the midst of his second semester of college due to the COVID-19 outbreak and has told us how much he misses all his friends from college.

Do take care of yourselves: get outside individually or in widely spaced groups for some exercise and fresh air. If you have a dog or cat—or other pet, remember there is no need for social distancing from them!

Be well, and stay in close touch with each other and with us here. We miss you!