THE PATH FORWARD

June 10, 2020

Dear GCU Community,

Georgian Court is continuously working on our path forward. Our Fall 2020 plan is to re-open and welcome students for classes in-person and online.

In recent surveys, our students expressed a desire for as much in-person instruction and service as safely possible. We are committed to meeting our students’ needs. Currently, three campus teams focused on Academics, Student Life, and Operations are monitoring and reviewing all guidance on safe operation.

Although we cannot predict all regulations that will be in place by Fall, decisions made thus far allow for flexibility and the best possible experience for students. This is the first of several communications to be shared as we prepare for Fall 2020.

SAFETY FIRST

• All faculty, students and staff will be required to sign a code of conduct aligned with state guidance and regulations for operation of higher education organizations.

• All faculty, students, and staff will be required to follow regulations related to wearing face coverings, maintaining social distancing, and any other aspects outlined in the code of conduct.

• Initially, all faculty, students, and staff will be screened before returning to work or classes. There will be ongoing monitoring, as needed.

• Access to campus will be limited to faculty, students and staff. Exceptions for others (e.g., guest speaker, contractor) allowed on campus will need to be approved in advance. Our pandemic risk management task force will share more information.

• Hand sanitizer and surface cleaning wipes will be widely available.

• An aggressive, rigorous cleaning schedule is in place for classrooms, common areas and offices.
Conducting classes

• Classrooms will be set up based on social distancing guidance.

• Studio, lab and clinical classes taught on campus will be subject to social distancing guidelines.

• All faculty members, and many offices, will hold some virtual office hours (online, synchronous).

• For in-person office hours and meetings, social distancing must be maintained. Faculty will be given guidance on any further requirements.

• Where possible, larger campus spaces will be re-purposed for classroom learning

• Classes will be offered as either hybrid or fully online. Some classes currently on the schedule will be modified to reflect any changes.

• Online components will use Blackboard Learn as the learning management system, with live portions using Blackboard Collaborate.

• Online components may occur live, when students and the professor are logged on at the same time, interacting through Blackboard (SYNCHRONOUSLY). Online components may also occur when the instructor and students are not logged on at a specific time and day (ASYNCHRONOUSLY). Most courses will have components of both.

• Classes already designated as online courses—with a specific day and time on the course schedule—can require students to attend a live, synchronous session. Students must attend synchronous sessions at the scheduled time.
Shifting to HyFlex

In-person classes (hybrid or currently listed as lecture) will be modified to a hybrid flexible (HyFlex) format. The shift to HyFlex means:

- All necessary course content is provided online using Blackboard Learn. Using the Blackboard Learn platform for all classes maintains consistency for our students.
- In-person classes focus on aspects of the course that most benefit from interaction between professors and students and between students. For in-person classes, students will be assigned to group sizes based on required/recommended safety guidelines.
- In-person sessions will be audio streamed and recorded when possible. In some cases, students may attend the in-person sessions via video conference using Blackboard Collaborate.
- Students will not be required to attend an in-person class if they are sick, in self-isolation, or otherwise unable to travel to campus.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Living & Dining on Campus

While no final guidance has been issued, statements particularly from the CDC give us hope that we can open our residence halls for the fall 2020 semester. We are developing plans that include:

- Staggered check-in times for residential move-in;
- quarantine space;
- transport and reporting procedures;
- overall social distancing policies;
- the best usage of common spaces;
- enhanced cleaning of all spaces, with rigorous cleaning schedules; and
- dining services modified to comply with social distancing guidelines.

These are some of the initial steps we are taking to ensure a safe return to GCU for Fall 2020. Please watch the website, your university email and social media for ongoing updates.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Marbach, Ph.D., President
Janice Warner, Ph.D., Provost
Georgian Court University