



TO: Felix Ngassa, Chair ECS/UAS

FROM: Philomena V. Mantella, President

DATE: July 9, 2020

RE: COVID Response Recommendations

C: Maria Cimitile, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
Greg Sanial, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Shawn Bultsma, Vice Chair, University Academic Senate
Robert Hollister, Chair, Faculty Salary and Budget Committee

Thank you, Felix, Shawn and Bob for the thoughtful discussion about the coming year and the challenges we face together and your thoughts about addressing them. I felt it was an excellent meeting and I hope you did, too. As we discussed, the recommendations of FSBC are very valuable and we are acting, in some capacity, on all the recommendations provided while keeping our mission at the center of planning in this challenging budget environment.

I have asked both VP Sanial and Provost Cimitile to continue to seek your input and recommendations before decisions are made with regard to university budgets, as well as providing information back to you and the faculty as a whole in a timely manner. The Provost has a budget webpage where university budget information will continue to be added as you recommend. Also, let me assure you that budget reductions and reallocations that need to take place will not disproportionately affect Academic and Students Affairs. As we consider divisional and cross divisional reductions and restructure, I repeatedly review the ASA / non-ASA proportionality as a double check that our work is consistent with our goals.

I appreciate you bringing to my attention the worry that faculty have around workload. I stand with Provost Cimitile in recognizing that the request to shift workloads to more teaching be made of faculty for one year *only*. Scholarly activity is essential to our mission at GVSU, the quality of education that our students deserve, and to the health of the institution as a whole. If the effects of the pandemic last more than this 2020-21 academic year, we will need to engage in further conversation as to how to mitigate damage of an extensive disruption.

Lastly, let me reiterate that the safety of our faculty, students and staff is critically important to me. I approved the requirement for masks in classrooms consistent with the public health guidance and we are enabling rigor around the other three pillars of safety during the pandemic; hand-washing, self-assessments, and social distancing across all university spaces.

Philomena V. Mantella
President

In reference to your question regarding those concerned with face-to-face teaching, the Provost and Deans have committed to a fair, cogent and sensitive mechanism to review faculty requests to teach online for all or part of their load while assuring that we maintain the high-quality low-density face-to-face experience for undergraduates that is worthy of GVSU. We also are building self-checks, contract tracing supports, isolation practices and other university mechanisms to address necessary containment structures, should we need to dial down face-to-face activities at any time or in any segment of the university. Further, I am exploring an expanded relationship with area health experts to assure we are getting the best advice possible at GVSU, in real time, throughout the year.

I would like to thank the leaders of faculty governance for their dedication, candor and support as we wade through these uncharted waters together. I'm happy to continue the dialogue and am pleased the faculty continue to focus on the questions of community safety, the quality of a GVSU experience and care for our students and each other. My continued thank you!

Philomena V. Mantella
President