

FINLANDIA

UNIVERSITY

Weekly President's Message March 27, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I've been mindful this week. I just wish my mindfulness would convert into more frequent check ins.

We are learning, the hard way perhaps, how to operate a University virtually and how to be community when our valued rhythms of human gathering are stripped away. I believe we have risen to the occasion on both accounts. I am grateful.

I'm also finding that my experience of time has changed. Was it just nine days ago that our spring semester went online? Was it just two weeks ago today that a national emergency was declared? Can that be?

My team is meeting (virtually) almost daily. We are responding to immediate and short-term challenges even as we prepare for our virtual HLC visit next week and for fall 2020 and beyond. Our board is engaged. At this time we cannot know the full impact of this crisis on our learning community. We do know it is changing, even now, the landscape of higher education. We will be tested. Yet, our various associations are advocating strongly on our behalf. I have spoken personally with our US legislators this week who know us and our mission. We are reading and watching closely to ensure that we are positioned to receive emergency funding intended to help campuses and students like ours. We will emerge stronger.

I am encouraged by the robust engagement and innovative thinking characterizing the many large and small Zoom meetings that now populate my calendar.

I thank you again for all that you are doing for our students and for one another during these challenging and anxious days.

In an earlier note to alumni and friends, I shared these thoughts:

- though our present circumstances may tempt us to narrow our vision and turn self-ward; let's resist;
- though we can't gather as we wish, let's practice community in ways virtual, meaningful, life-giving, and fun; and
- though we may find it difficult to see beyond today's alerts and alarm, together let's lean into the days coming that are beyond this present crisis.

PJ