



“Our Finest Hour” May 4, 2020

Good Morning to All COE Faculty & Staff:

You will recall last Monday I focused on “a turn for the better” in our war on the coronavirus. That “turn” continues in a positive direction. To wit, now that the Governor’s reopening plan is in effect and Greene County – Springfield Health Department guidelines have been updated, MSU is poised to release more specific information regarding our approach moving forward. This messaging will occur beginning tomorrow via various outlets, including but not limited to a direct email to each of you. All I can say at this point is that I am in complete agreement with the SGCHD guidelines and what I am hearing the University plans to enact that (again) will be released tomorrow.

Those of you who have asked for clearance to go to your office in Hill Hall or PCOB or to some other location on campus, please sit tight for another 24 hours, then contact me directly via email or my personal cell (417) 576-4468. After tomorrow’s communique from the University, we will be in a position to provide specific clearances at some point on an “as needed” basis. More on all that tomorrow. . .

For now, suffice it to say that I am going to be more cautious and deliberate than, perhaps, federal and state guidelines allow, again following our University policies and guidelines. For example, if a departmental office is set to reopen let’s say by July 2020, we may still limit the number of people in that space at any given time. We may give some thought to staggered “in person” hours in our Office of Professional Development Services, so we can comply with guidelines there as well. In any event, forward thinking in this manner is now the direction we are headed.

We have good reason to be optimistic. We are managing the end of our Spring 2020 semester very well. Summer School enrollments look really good right now. We have a plan to deliver Fall 2020 courses, and we will be returning to our offices and classrooms incrementally beginning in the fall, perhaps sooner.

If Masterpiece Theatre’s “World on Fire” episode last night is historically correct, evidently after the Allies defeated Rommel and captured all remaining 250,000 German soldiers in northern Africa, Winston Churchill said something to the effect of, “This not the beginning. This is not the end. This is not even the beginning of the end. It is the end of the beginning.” (Somebody fact check that, and let me know.)

Personally, I believe we are at a point that might very well be “the end of the beginning” of the coronavirus’s negative impact on our way of life. I remain confident that COVID-19 will be defeated. It is just a matter of time. I hope this is the case, but (again) we will proceed deliberately, cautiously, and strategically. Soon, perhaps, we can begin thinking about changing “Our Finest Hour” to “Back to the Future.” I will be back with you sometime tomorrow. Until then,

Keep Calm & Plan On,

David