



## “Our Finest Hour” May 1, 2020

Good May Day to All,

What a gorgeous morning to dance around the Maypole. The azaleas are in full bloom, tiny bluebird hatchlings are chirping, and the grass needs to be mowed again. If anyone wants to drive out to Deerfield upon Fellows and pick lettuce and radishes, looks like I’ll be able to extend the invitation on Monday. Hooray!

By now you have no doubt familiarized yourself with Governor Parson’s relaxed social distancing guidelines and the Springfield Greene County Health Department’s proposal to begin gradually lifting certain restrictions. Today, from 1 – 4 PM I will meet with the COVID-19 Executive Team to “semi-finalize” plans to manage our return to “semi-normalcy.”

A reminder that the University can adhere to stricter guidelines than the city and county, which (in turn) can adopt stricter guidelines than the state, which (again in turn) can adhere to stricter guidelines than the federal orders. As soon as I have permission to share our College of Education plans for “re-entry” I will do so. We will all need to sit tight for just a bit until the University releases an official statement. Much of that messaging began this week, thank you very much.

Also remember that our approach in COE will follow the University’s guidelines for a thoughtful, strategic, gradual return to some offices and facilities. Until those guidelines are released, please know that University officials have been hard at work (and are again today) to ensure all students, faculty, and staff who once again begin returning to work incrementally will be in environments that are as safe as possible, following all local and University guidelines.

So put your “happy face” on, do a “happy dance” (preferably around a Maypole), and enjoy a wonderful spring weekend. Am guessing sometime on Monday, if not before, I will be able to share more with you. We will NOT return immediately and haphazardly, or as we say in the Ozarks “whole hog”; we will return cautiously and incrementally. And I will personally work with anyone who chooses to be even more cautious and incremental.

Again, I will be back with you as soon as I have clearance to share more. Remember, hugging is still off-limits for awhile, and for me it is probably off-limits indefinitely. But I am anxious to see you all in person, cautiously and incrementally, and to tell you face to face how much I appreciate each and every one of you.

Keep Calm and Be Cautious and Incremental,

David