

Update from May 1, 2020

Dear LSC Community:

By now you may have heard that yesterday Governor Walz extended the stay home order until May 18th. He is easing some holds on small businesses that can deliver or rent their goods using curbside pickup or delivery.

You may also be aware that one academic program, law enforcement, was previously approved as a test case across our system for implementing limited face-to-face instruction (with cautious and deliberate guidelines) for the skills portion of the program. With this modified order, the Governor and the Minnesota State Chancellor are letting us know that LSC made the right decision to operate our current online and limited campus for the rest of spring semester.

I know you are tired of this situation and very much want to “make it all go away.” You want clarity and date-certain plans. We all do! Yet our reality right now is to continue in the best way we can just as we are. When we have any new information or are given the “go ahead” for any face-to-face options, we certainly will inform the entire campus community.

But please don't think everything is just static and nothing is happening. There is so much going on, it's hard to track! Deep cleaning work and clearing away projects. Great discoveries in connecting with students, new and highly successful ideas for creative enrollment management and retention, amazing marketing and recruitment, faculty and staff calling both prospective and current students just to be in touch and lend encouragement and advice. Zippy Hour. Meditation. Outstanding video presentations.

Every day I see examples like these as a testament to your dedication to LSC and our students. Even your frustration (and mine) about the situation stems from your very real caring for the lives and futures of our students.

The great work going on here at LSC was on my mind during my reading hours. I came across this quote from Pema Chödrön in *Taking the Leap: Freeing Ourselves From Old Habits and Fears*:

“Deep down in the human spirit there is a reservoir of courage. It is always available, always waiting to be discovered.

In the last years of his life, Chögyam Trungpa taught unceasingly on the very real possibility of creating enlightened society—a society where individuals cultivated unconditional friendliness for themselves and unconditional caring for others. It is true that when we try to do either of these things, we find that it's not so easy. The resistance to accepting ourselves and to putting others' welfare first is surprisingly strong. Nevertheless, he spoke with enthusiasm and confidence about our remarkable capacity to be spiritual warriors, fearless men and women who can help to heal the sorrow of the world” (p.95).

Recognize your frustration with this COVID crisis situation for what it is: an argument with reality.

So come on! Each of you has already tapped into your reservoir of courage when together we made this major change over the extended spring break. You accepted the fact that some of what we did was maybe not so perfect, yet it was and remains quite effective. You put our students' welfare ahead of

your own, ahead of your fears and worries. Based on Chögyam Trungpa's teaching, you are spiritual warriors striving for an enlightened society. And it's not so easy, but we now know that we can do this!

The planning for re-entry is well underway. These plans prioritize not only academic programs but also include the other services necessary to support more students back on campus and campus locations. You will hear more about that soon, as the group has begun sharing the outline with Administrator's Council, Faculty Shared Governance, and other groups. Watch the website for more information.

So keep going. Find the courage to roll with this a while longer until we know more and are able to do more. We are ready for action, and right now our action is focused on doing our very best for the last weeks of spring semester.

We have this, folks!

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