



*From the Office of the President*

**John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.**  
REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**Fall Academic Schedule Change and Contingency Plans**  
**Office of the President**  
**May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Dear colleagues,

I am reaching out to you in unprecedented times. We struggled together last fall to overcome the devastating cyberattack. This spring we are forced to persevere apart to keep a once-in-a-century pandemic at bay while completing our academic year. I understand the frustration, the tiredness and the fear we are confronting. I am also filled with profound gratitude for the courage, perseverance and dedication you have demonstrated throughout this year to serve our students, your fellow staff and our entire community.

Now we must face an uncertain future as our nation continues to do battle with COVID-19 and the economic pain in its wake. St. Ignatius reflected on such challenges and called on us to remember that "God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to abandon ourselves unreservedly, so that we might be molded by God's grace, even as we cannot see where that path may lead us." But lead we must. In truth, we need Jesuit Catholic education now more than ever. Today we announce that Regis University has determined a path forward to bring students back to campus this fall. We will uphold our commitment to keeping our community as safe as possible, while providing an optimal campus experience for our on-campus students.

We are encouraged by our state and local governments' swift action. The curve is flattening and allowing initial steps toward a return to normalcy. Colorado is ramping up its testing capacity to be well prepared and has issued potential fall scenarios for ongoing responses to COVID-19. We have developed multiple, well-informed contingency plans for the fall and we will continue to adhere to expert public health guidance.

First, the schedule for fall:

The traditional fall semester will begin Aug. 17, which is earlier than previously published, and on-campus learning will end on Nov. 20. Experts are predicting a spike in COVID-19 cases concurrent to the winter flu season. With this altered schedule, our students will safely be home if this second surge occurs. To ensure quality and promote safety, our traditional, two-day fall break will be cancelled.

Finals for the fall will be conducted online between Nov. 30 and Dec. 6.



All on-campus courses will be able to move online only if necessary. Regis University's 30 years of expertise in distance education enabled this spring's smooth migration to online learning. Our students remained engaged at a very high rate, thanks as much to our terrific faculty as our experience and technology.

Spring 2021 semester will begin as scheduled on Jan. 11, 2021.

Regis University's extensive online degree and certificate offerings, in accelerated terms, will continue on their normal schedules.

We are ensuring that all buildings across our campuses are cleaned to COVID-19 standards. We are monitoring advice from experts and guidelines for the State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver regarding social distancing and personal protection.

How we work and learn may be different. Very different, in fact. But at the core is our commitment to distinctive education and student success.

Throughout this past year, I have been continually inspired by your hard work, innovation and generosity. Seeing the Jesuit Catholic spirit come to life in our community has been humbling and rewarding. I was particularly moved by a student who donated her remaining meal plan account to help feed homeless high school students in the Denver area, and to learn of Regis-educated nurses who are volunteering to work in a COVID-19 ward to meet the greatest need.

Since March, we have safely sheltered 164 resident students who have no safe home to return to or a home that lacks the technical infrastructure to support online learning. Many faculty and staff have donated laptops to help those students.

I have been invited to several conversations with students to explore how we address, educate and mitigate xenophobia for our faculty, staff, students and their families. The mission-infused education we all provide here is so vitally important and so needed. We must all aspire to do more, especially for those marginalized and most vulnerable. And we must continue forward. Thank you for inspiring me to aspire to more and move forward.

Gratefully,

Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.

President