



October 28, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff:

We are on the threshold of accomplishing something that we can and should be proud of: the safe return to the residential campus that is so meaningful to our students and the successful completion of our fall term. In fact, among the many lessons that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us is how much our students are willing to endure in order to continue their Richmond education and how much our faculty and staff are willing to do to make that possible for them. In many ways, the pandemic has allowed us to shine a spotlight for all to see on what we have always known to make the University such a special place: the quality of our students, faculty, and staff.

During these unprecedented times that have challenged the University in so many ways, we have struggled to find ways to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our staff and faculty and to express our great appreciation at a time when our options are limited and our budget is strained to keep up with the expenses brought on by the pandemic. Words of thanks are important, and they are certainly warranted, but they cannot fully reflect the significance of what we have accomplished working together in these most difficult of circumstances.

In less than one month we will celebrate Thanksgiving. In the midst of all the challenges we have faced, and that we will face in the future, we all still have so much for which to be thankful. Among these, thankfulness for the determination, resilience, flexibility, care, and steadfast dedication of our faculty and staff are foremost in our thoughts. That's why, in consultation with Dr. Crutcher and the board of trustees, we have decided to extend the Thanksgiving holiday break for staff and faculty this year to include Monday, Nov. 23, and Tuesday, Nov. 24, giving you the entire Thanksgiving week to spend in reflection and rest and, hopefully, in the company of those you love. We hope this small gesture will help to amplify the deep sense of gratitude that we share for all you have done to help make our semester a remarkable success.

Because a number of students will remain on our campus during the Thanksgiving holiday, some on our staff will not be able to enjoy these extra days off. In line with University policy, those employees will be appropriately compensated for working during this addition to our break.

The road ahead remains challenging, and we cannot predict what the future may hold. We do know that the pandemic is still with us, and we are certain to feel its effects in the coming semester. But we move toward the end of this semester and look forward to the spring term with great hope, buoyed in significant measure by the remarkable resilience and dedication of our faculty and staff. Your efforts have helped us to overcome great adversity these past months, and we are confident that together we will rise to whatever challenges confront us in the future.

Thank you all for being the Spiders who make our web strong, and happy Thanksgiving.

David Hale
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Jeffrey Legro
Executive Vice President and Provost