

April 27, 2020

Dear Linfield community,

We are receiving many questions about what is likely for the fall semester. The short answer is I don't know. That's not satisfying, for which I apologize. I would like, however, to share our preparations and the alternatives we are presently considering.

I am honored, along with the presidents at Pacific and Lewis & Clark, to represent independent colleges on an Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission committee looking into how, when and under what conditions universities might reopen. The governor's office, in collaboration with health authorities, will ultimately establish timelines for returning to in-person classes. When that will occur is unknown. Another unknown is the latitude any institution might have in responding to limits in place this fall. Within this framework, Linfield administrators are evaluating a number of possibilities.

Please know that every one of the concepts below is preliminary. They will give you a sense that we are considering a whole lot of alternatives, and will use a data-driven and research-based approach to vet them. As we move forward, there could be better alternatives.

Our planning envisions Linfield University opening this fall, with students returning to our campuses, faculty teaching the personal, academically intensive courses that are our hallmark and staff members doing all they can to provide support. Beyond that, until we know more, we will continue to evaluate numerous possible scenarios, including:

- Begin the semester earlier, in order to be done sooner in case a new round of social distancing is announced.

- Or... begin the semester later.

- Consider short, single-class blocks over the course of the semester rather than offering a single 16-week calendar.

- Expand flexibility in student housing, following guidelines from the Oregon Health Authority and the governor's office while providing the best Linfield residential experience possible. This could include more single rooms, more frequent cleaning, fewer residence hall meetings, etc.

- If possible, pre-test students and staff upon arrival, both for COVID-19 and for post-infection immunity through antibodies.

- If possible, establish our own robust testing system and protocols for the full academic year.

Establish a space where anyone with symptoms could be tested promptly and quarantined, if necessary.

Facilitate medically vulnerable members of our community to continue working or studying remotely.

Limit visitors to campus, as well as travel on official business.

Prohibit gatherings above a pre-determined size, perhaps indefinitely.

Provide frequent deep cleaning of our facilities.

Test all athletes before competitions, and limit spectators (if any).

We have not made any decisions about these possibilities, and likely won't be in position