

March 2, 2022

Here is an update on a few items this week:

**CARES Act funding.** All full-time and part-time students, both undergrad and grad, who are registered this spring are receiving emails notifying them of CARES Act funding this semester. We are following the model used last semester in that the amount of funding will be based on expected family contribution (EFC). The actual funds will follow within the next week or two with a goal of getting them distributed prior to Spring break.

**COVID Update.** As we anticipated, the CDC has changed its guidelines regarding masking. You can read about the guidelines at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). As of today, Allegany County remains at “high” risk and the CDC recommends continued use of masks indoors. The Faculty Senate-sponsored Hybrid Town Hall last Thursday provided the opportunity for campus members to ask questions and offer their opinions. The Response and Recovery Team continues to monitor conditions in the region as well as on campus. There seems to be a consensus building to have campus-wide testing when we return from spring break to ensure campus safety. We will continue to follow our testing protocol moving forward regardless, with vaccine-exempt individuals testing weekly and allowing others to test if they would like to do so. We will provide an update to campus if and when the county risk level changes. And we will continue our weekly dashboard for the foreseeable future. Lastly, CVS in LaVale was advertising three free KN95 masks for individuals who stop in. Several other businesses in the area also have free N95 and/or KN95 masks available.

**In person coffees.** Thank you to the faculty and staff that have joined me for informal coffee discussions over the past two weeks. I’ve enjoyed the conversations, and I apologize that we never seem to have enough time to discuss all the issues that arise. I have enjoyed the discussions that have focused around what the future may hold for higher education and FSU as we emerge from the pandemic.

**Community Meeting.** Members of the Executive Team met with community members on Monday evening to discuss the [interim policy](#) on Hate-Bias Incidents (HBI). The policy has been sent to Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and SGA leadership for their review and input. The meeting was a follow-up to a meeting held last semester.

**Financial Aid Offers.** A big thank you to the staff in Financial Aid and IT for distributing our financial aid offers to prospective students and their families. As part of our continuing strategic effort to use technology more effectively, the Financial Aid Office, working with IT and staff from Academic Affairs, implemented new software to streamline the process. As is the usual case, the first time the software is used the learning curve is a bit steeper than we hope. I am pleased that we got our offers out prior to some of our competitor institutions.

**Mountain Maryland PACE (Positive Attitudes Change Everything).** PACE, the Mountain Maryland event highlighting the accomplishments and needs of Western Maryland held annually in Annapolis for legislators, is happening this week. Several of us will be attending to represent FSU and remind legislators of our mission and contributions to the region and State. One highlight of the event for me is the chance to connect with alumni(ae) in the legislature as delegates, senators or staff.

Please continue to be safe and enjoy the improved weather!

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