

## **Students:**

NDSU is committed to a live and in-person fall semester, and I know you are excited about returning to campus to start classes. You probably also have some concerns about what, exactly, that return to campus will look like.

I'm writing to you today to share some extremely good news that will impact your fall semester and help reduce the risks to students, faculty and staff. Moments ago, NDSU received final approval for a grant of nearly \$20 million to help us with our COVID-19 planning. Let me take a few minutes to discuss how we intend to use this money.

The cornerstone of our planning revolves around a hybrid system of delivering classes known as the [HyFlex Educational Model](#). The grant enables us to use technology to convert nearly every single classroom on campus into a room that can seamlessly and synchronously integrate in-person teaching with remote instruction in as close to a "normal" manner as possible.

The HyFlex world is one where students and faculty who are vulnerable, in isolation or in quarantine, can still effectively teach, learn and be an active part of the NDSU community. We have heard the concerns of some faculty and students about returning to the classroom environment, and this model should help allay those concerns. Of course, we prefer if both faculty and students are live and in-person in the classroom, but the simultaneous delivery of HyFlex provides an incredibly close substitute for being in-person. HyFlex allows students who are concerned about in-person attendance to still participate in class, and it allows faculty to "flip" the class and teach remotely to students that are both in the classroom and remote.

When you return to campus, you can attend classes in person to start, but then if you have to quarantine or isolate, you can attend remotely and not lose any academic progress. If you have underlying health conditions that make you vulnerable to COVID-19, you can immediately start with remote classes. To augment these precautions, we will be introducing additional physical spacing in classes as well as requiring face coverings while in class for all students.

We also received significant funding to help NDSU mitigate the viral risk in its physical spaces. Things like cleaning supplies, sanitizing stations, touchless equipment, PPE, and plexiglass shields, etc. All these items should help us to reduce the spread of the virus on our campus this fall.

The future impact of COVID-19 remains uncertain, and campuses around the country are implementing various changes. Some are starting early and ending at Thanksgiving. We have opted not to modify our schedule. Instead, we have opted to use technology to modify our delivery methods and negate the need for schedule adjustments while still maintaining the learning that occurs in the live, interactive environment.

However, this will only work if we all pull together to get it done. On our side, we'll be doing everything we can to complete the conversion of these classrooms prior to your arrival. We want all students and faculty to start the semester utilizing HyFlex so that they have a comfort level with the technology and the quality of the educational services. This will be a huge task, but we are doing everything we can to make it happen.

You, as a student, will also have a part to play. We'll need you to be patient with the changes on campus. We'll need you to cooperate with our prevention plans like wearing face coverings and social distancing. We'll need you to remember that some people on campus may be more at risk from the virus than others, and their precautions deserve to be respected. Like I said, we're all in this together.

Throughout the summer, there will be additional information about these changes coming to you from NDSU. Please check your NDSU email account regularly. You can email questions that you have to [NDSU.fall2020@ndus.edu](mailto:NDSU.fall2020@ndus.edu).

The start of a fall semester is always a time of anticipation and excitement. This year more than ever. We are making significant changes to make campus safer, but there will be some bumps in the road. For these, we ask for your patience. We will get through this together and have a great academic year.

Enjoy your summer and please stay safe. Go Bison!