

COVID-19: Thank you for your work

BGSU President Rodney K. Rogers <president@email.bgsu.edu>

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To: [REDACTED]



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 31, 2020

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise – with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.”

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States of America
December 1, 1862

Dear [REDACTED]

These are unprecedented times. In the 110-year history of Bowling Green State University, we have never faced this type of situation. While the COVID-19 pandemic may not equate to the crisis our nation faced in 1862 during the Civil War, there is a great deal of uncertainty and concern about the future.

How we treat people in a crisis defines who we are as a community. Your actions over the past three weeks demonstrate that we are indeed a strong community that cares for one another. Our faculty and students moved to a remote teaching and learning model, our staff transitioned to remote working, and some of you were unable to work remotely and have been required to use your paid leave. You have supported and helped each other, quickly learned new pedagogies, found new ways to accomplish your work, provided support to our students, and the list goes on. None of this was easy. It has required sacrifices, and I want to thank you for your efforts.

While BGSU entered this crisis in a solid financial position with growing enrollment and record student success rates, there are challenges ahead. In response to the current situation, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has discussed a potential 20 percent cut in state funding. Although some institutions have decided to refund a flat standard amount to students for unused housing, dining and parking, we have decided to absorb fixed overhead costs and are providing a prorated refund to students for their unused housing, dining and parking plans. Federal legislation has been passed that may benefit higher education institutions such as BGSU, but it is too early to know the level of resources that may be available. Finally, and most significantly, while prior to the crisis we were seeing signs of continued enrollment success, it is simply too early to understand the impact the pandemic may have on our retention, new student enrollment and ongoing enrollment at BGSU. We are actively planning for a number of contingencies, but with limited understanding of the impact that COVID-19 may have on the University.

We have taken a variety of steps to give us the ability to adapt, adjust and persevere. We have limited new purchases except for critical supplies. We have taken measures to accommodate as many of our administrative and classified staff as possible to work remotely so they can conserve their leave time. We have implemented a freeze on new and open positions, even suspending some searches that were already in progress.

In addition, we are also working to delay other decisions until we learn more about the impact of COVID-19. Please know that we understand these actions have impacted the faculty and staff at BGSU. We are at the beginning of this crisis and there is more work to be accomplished. We will know much more in the coming weeks. As president, I commit to keeping you informed as much as possible about these issues.

We know that any progress that has been accomplished is because of people working together, supporting, encouraging and caring for one another. In short, this is how a public university creates public good.

This too shall pass. We will be a stronger university, but more importantly a stronger community when this current storm is over. I am so very proud of the creativity, hard work and commitment that our faculty, staff and students have demonstrated. We are thinking anew and acting anew. Thank you for your work. I know many of you have been personally impacted by this crisis. Whether

you're supporting children at home in their remote learning, or you know someone who lost their employment or who is battling this virus, we are in this together. Let me know how I can assist you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney K. Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Rodney K. Rogers, Ph.D.

President

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