

FACULTY & STAFF QUESTIONS

Do we know when staff will report back to campus? What happens after April 30?

NAYEF: We do not yet know when staff will report back to campus, but we are committed to following public health guidelines and the directives of state and federal leaders. The college is still operating in support of students and the academic program. Because everyone plays a vital role on campus, everyone is still working — either flexibly on campus or at home — to keep things running smoothly. We will reevaluate this if necessary, but at this point are planning to continue our present schedule and commitments to employees through the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30.

Do we know what we are planning regarding summer school? Will it be online? If we don't know yet, when will a decision be made?

MIKE: A decision will be made soon. Tim Schmitz has reached out to faculty members to gauge their ability and willingness to teach remotely if that's determined to be the best approach to summer school this year. We will let everyone know before registration.

Is there a decision about whether the Carolina Panthers training camp will be held on campus as planned in July and August?

NAYEF: Before the pandemic, the plan was for the Panthers to return to Wofford, and we have a signed contract saying that they will return. They, like the rest of us, are in a holding pattern now, and they have not made a decision yet about the fall season or summer training camp.

What are we doing to reach out to students to make sure that they are coping emotionally and socially with the stresses of this situation?

ROBERTA: Our staff in the Division of Campus Life and Student Development are engaging with students every day. Our programs and services are available virtually.

Our counselors in the Wellness Center are maintaining appointments online; they have contacted students individually, and they will be organizing groups through our secure online platform (doxy.me) for students seeking additional emotional support during this time. We will offer general support as well as topical groups (senior cohort, for example) for students who may not be participating in counseling but would like additional emotional support. Our new counselor, Tiara Woney will facilitate these groups and the times and instructions will be in the Daily Announcements and on our social media. Up to ten students can participate at each time and any student can join at any time. No prior appointment or reservation is necessary.

We continue to follow up with Starfish concerns also. Students and employees have access to telemedicine appointments for those who are sick, and they have office hours for people who need to come to the center. In addition, we have the 24-hour, seven days a week mental health hotline. As you know our students are meeting with their academic advisors and professors.

The O-staff is meeting weekly via zoom with Dean Wallace as is the residence life staff with Dean Lemere and Mr. Lollis. I understand the Ras and residents of one hall are creating a Wofford cookbook!

Is there a concern that this pandemic will affect fall enrollments? Is this being considered in budget planning?

NAYEF/BRAND: Keeping our enrollment up is a key responsibility at this time of uncertainty. We are well ahead on deposits of where we were last year. Admission and the OMC have worked together to develop virtual tours for prospective students, and there are plans for virtual events with faculty, current students and representatives from the career center, diversity and inclusion, international programs and financial aid. These videos not only have the benefit of promoting Wofford as we normally would, but they're also giving prospective students and their families an opportunity to see how we as a community are adapting to the present situation.

Are layoffs or furloughs of staff being considered?

NAYEF: As the pandemic stretches on, we may have to make hard decisions. Wofford is in good fiscal condition and enrollment remains robust. Should COVID-19 stretch into the fall or affect enrollment, however, we will need to take a close look at ways to minimize expenses across the board. Let us hope that it does not come to this. Wofford is a community, and we want to preserve employment as much as possible because everyone plays an important role on this campus.

When will operating and R&R budgets for FY20-21 be set and communicated to departments?

CHRIS: Ordinarily we would expect to begin communicating these budgets to the campus following our Board meeting scheduled for May 8. As previously mentioned, the environment is changing rapidly and enrollment is a big piece of the puzzle for our budget. If enrollment trends remain positive, we are hopeful that we can share this information with the campus on our normal timeline in May. Of course we will have to continue to monitor enrollment and economic trends throughout the summer and be prepared to respond as circumstances evolve.

How will study abroad be impacted in the fall ... and even spring 2021?

MIKE: We are continuing to monitor how the situation involving COVID-19 is evolving, not only in the United States, but internationally, including countries where our students participate in study abroad programs. We currently have nearly 80 Wofford students planning to study abroad in the fall. Decisions regarding study abroad will be made between the college and our study abroad partners based on data and recommendations from health experts. Staff in the Office of International Programs is working closely with our partners and with students and families so students who want opportunities to study away have those opportunities if at all possible.

Will there be/are there delays or cancellations of renovation, repair or construction projects on campus? Are construction crews taking precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19.

CHRIS: We have three major construction projects at the moment: The residence hall for first-year students, the new environmental studies building and the third phase of the library renovation. Funding for all three projects was secured prior to the effects of COVID-19 and all three projects remain on schedule at this time. Our construction partner on both projects, Robbins and Morton, is preserving the safety and security of their site for their employees. They conduct daily wellness screenings of workers on the site, have hand sanitizer positioned throughout the job sites and are encouraging construction crews to maintain 6 feet of distance between one another as much as possible. They have also implemented measures to sanitize the entire construction site on a regular basis.

Is there a way to specifically help students who need financial assistance during this time?

ROBERTA: Boyce Lawton, James Stukes and Ron Robinson are all working to address the needs of students who may be struggling financially while away from campus. There are several funds on campus designated for this effort, but one of the best ways is through the OneWofford fund. You can find the link to it at Wofford.edu/coronavirus. Our Advancement Office is also working to secure additional funding for students in need.

If this does go into August, does the college anticipate starting the next academic year on time in a virtual format to maintain the current calendar? When would a decision be made?

NAYEF: Our hope is to start the 2020-21 academic year with everyone on campus. But we know there are a lot of things out of our control as our world responds to COVID-19. We are continuing to monitor this situation by having discussions with health experts, reviewing data and following the recommendations coming from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

and our state and federal government. It's good to know that so many of you have worked hard to teach remotely for the remainder of this semester, and there's no doubt we're adding another tool to the college's toolbox in the event it's needed going forward. We believe we should be able to make a decision by early in July.

How will this affect summer events such as conferences? Are there restrictions on professional travel?

MIKE: Many summer conference organizers are already making the decision to cancel, postpone or go online. Wofford is also restricting travel. Individual exceptions may be made depending on the circumstances, but we are discouraging it at this time.

Could Wofford mobilize (through a third party such as a physician, insurance company, hospital, private company) to test all faculty, staff and students so that we could certify “No COVID-19” and retest on an appropriate schedule until a vaccine or effective treatment is available?

NAYEF: That's an interesting option, and lots of big corporations and organizations such as the NBA are considering rapid, prick-tests that can determine a COVID-19 diagnosis in less than 15 minutes. At this point, however, the technology isn't there, and when it does become available, front-line workers in health care, transportation workers, public servants and others will have priority. There are also concerns of false results, privacy, cost and the ability to trace contacts, which is still recommended by the CDC and WHO. I guess the short answer would have been, “it's complicated.”

*** LAST QUESTION ***

What actions is the college taking to ensure employees don't burn out with extra COVID workload on top of their normal workload?

NAYEF: Senior leaders have asked supervisors to extend compassion and flexibility to all employees of Wofford College. That being said, I understand it is stressful to have to learn a new way to work while facing the challenges that many of us are experiencing as we care for our families and check in on friends and family near and far. COVID-19 has meant an increased workload for some, but a reduction for others. Unfortunately, that's just the nature of things. This will end, and at some point, we will all get back to some semblance of normal. It's imperative that each of us continue to do the work that makes Wofford what it is to our students and alumni, but it is also important to set realistic goals and to identify good stopping points each day. Please do not hesitate to share any concerns or barriers that you are experiencing with your supervisor.