

May 26, 2020

## COVID Update #7- Forging a Plan Ahead

Dear Iḷisaġvik College Community-

We are in week 10 of our new normal. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed each of our lives—some in the similar ways and others in very different ways. Through this entire process, I have been reminded to be thankful and grateful for many different aspects of my life. Iḷisaġvik College is high on that list—and each of you contribute to that greatly. As we have done our best to maneuver through this unprecedented time, quyanaqpauraq (thank-you so very much) for your commitment to our students, to our college, to our communities, and to the safety of each of our co-workers.

We cannot project what the future holds. Our closure, and then transition to telework status, have been very different for all of us. I have heard overall positive feedback about how we are functioning at this time as an institution. With that being said, we have taken this feedback and begun to think about what the rest of summer looks like and how we are imagining starting the Fall 2020 semester. Please be mindful that it is possible that we will have to move back and forth from open to closed and any iteration in between as we progress into the year. Experts say transmission is increased when people are traveling, living in group housing, attending mass gatherings and around asymptomatic people. This is reflective of a college environment, and therefore we need to pay extra attention to makes sure we are helping to mitigate the virus. (Information cited from the UA On-site Operations Plan.) Given this, we must make a flexible plan to accomplish our goal for the future.

Our **GOAL** is to kick off our Fall 2020 semester as we have for the past decade. We are anticipating seeing everyone (all staff & full time Faculty) on campus in person for Staff Orientation the week of August 17, and classes will start as planned the week of August 24.

So how do we get to this place safely and responsibly? Please see the attached document for our plan moving forward. Please be watching for our phased Response Plan to be sent by mid-June.

The COVID-19 virus is a new normal for all us. We are not going to wake up one morning and COVID will be gone. This is our new reality. It will get better with more research, and a vaccine, but it will not be going away. Because of this, we must take steps to re-open, but we do so in as safe a manner as we can, supporting our employees as best we can, and preparing to welcome our students back so they feel comfortable, and ready to learn.

I stress that administration is monitoring the situation at the local, regional, and state level so we can make the most up to date decisions possible. We appreciate each of your understanding as we traverse this new landscape together. I will continue to communicate at least weekly and if needed more often as the days and weeks go by.

With gratitude and positive forward thinking.

Dr. Pearl Brower  
President