

March 9, 2021

Dear Mariner Parents,

It's hard to believe we're coming up on the one-year anniversary of the first headlines about a newly identified coronavirus and our initial internal conversations. MCU and all of higher education faced daunting questions about how to react to the changes and risks presented by a worldwide pandemic, and just how long we might need to brace for this unprecedented situation. Honestly, 12 months feels more like 12 years! I am sure many of you feel the same, but we have come a long way.

During this difficult period, we have strived to communicate as openly and actively as possible with our stakeholders. Our efforts have not been perfect, and not all of our decisions were met with support, but it has not been for lack of motivation and conviction. Remote learning, while not ideal, has evolved, and by fall, we felt as if we had adapted quite well to our new circumstances. But, as students regularly convey (and we know experientially), nothing yet fully replaces the personal interaction that Marymount, with our low teacher-to-student ratios, normally delivers. We have had to deviate from our greatest strength. Plus, we know our students miss interacting with one another.

Like many of our higher education peers, MCU is facing headwinds from this global health crisis and the financial havoc it has caused for so many. Despite the obstacles, we remain committed to our educational mission and the critical planning now underway for fall 2021 and beyond. We have an opportunity to come out on the other side of the pandemic as a stronger university, thanks to an unwavering focus on delivering and sustaining the best possible education for our students.

In a preview of fall, we are delighted to welcome a new class and a return to significant in-person instruction, giving undergraduates the chance to attend classes with their peers and professors on campus. They can expect classrooms at no more than 50 percent capacity with cleaning between classes for safety. We also plan to resume our athletic program and a residential experience as well, in cooperation with the county and in compliance with recommended health and safety protocols, of course. Our housing capacity at the Villas' will be reduced, with single occupancy offered at doubles pricing for our students' benefit. Our goal is to offer the exciting college experience our students have come to expect, despite some continuing restrictions.

As we continue to negotiate the challenges of our present while prioritizing everyone's safety, I pray the combination of vaccines and herd immunity restores some kind of normalcy to our lives. We are encouraging the MCU community to obtain the COVID vaccine as soon as they are able. Let's keep the positive momentum going as we enter the second half of the semester and our longer-term future.

I remain committed in service to our mission for our students.



Brian Marcotte
President