

LA CROSSE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHARED STATEMENT

FALL 2020 - RETURN TO CAMPUS

The past few months presented a challenge unlike anything our community and respective campuses have ever faced. UW-La Crosse, Viterbo University and Western Technical College responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by closing our buildings, reimagining the way we teach, and finding creative ways to serve and support our community. As our attention shifts to a return to campus this fall, we have another opportunity to rise above the current challenges.

In recent weeks, we began the phased process of reopening our campuses. Now, leaders at all three of our institutions are planning the next phase for returning to campus this fall, with health and safety as our highest priority. Each of our campuses will have a unique plan for delivering instruction through in-person, online and hybrid formats, and resident students will once again be living and learning together. But we recognize these things are going to look different than they have in the past.

Each of our institutions is developing a comprehensive health and safety plan aligned with CDC and La Crosse County Health Department guidelines. These plans will be tailored to the unique needs of each campus and will include elements such as social distancing, the use of masks, and close coordination with local health experts. This pandemic remains a significant threat deserving of our full attention. While we look forward to a return to the familiar, we cannot afford to slide into old habits.

To our students, families and supporters, and staff and faculty: We realize you may experience a range of emotions returning to campus. Most of all, we suspect you're eager to learn more about how life and school will look in the fall. We are working diligently to find and communicate those answers. We also realize that the challenges we face are complex, evolving and difficult to predict — which is why we ask for your continued patience as we work to gather and share as much information as possible. We trust that many of your questions will be answered as we share additional details in the coming weeks.

None of this has been easy or ideal. This spring, we missed the sight of students in our halls, study sessions on our lawns and graduation caps tumbling through the air. But we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to keep our community safe. Now, as we begin to reopen our campuses, we cannot forget the scope or severity of this crisis. The virus is a long-term issue requiring long-term focus and action. We stand united in our commitment to limiting the impact of COVID-19 on the La Crosse community. We respectfully ask that you do your part to help keep our community safe, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

With gratitude,
President Glenna Temple, Viterbo University
Chancellor Joe Gow, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
President Roger Stanford, Western Technical College

