



LAKE SUPERIOR
STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear Lakers:

This is an unprecedented time in the life of the University, our nation, and the world. Not since the Spanish Flu worldwide pandemic of 1918 has there been anything similar to what we are now experiencing. Not since the days after September 11, 2001 has there been such uncertainty about the future of the nation. We are working through a very challenging and stressful situation. All of us are adapting to a changing world faster than we ever dreamed, and faster than we would prefer.

More cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the Coronavirus, are likely to be identified in the United States in the coming days, including more instances of community spread. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expect that widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur. In the coming months, most of the U.S. population will likely be exposed to the virus.

Social distancing is the new practice we must incorporate into our daily routine. This is difficult because we are “hard-wired” to be in community. It is especially difficult in a university where we all thrive in the marketplace and exchange of ideas. Whether attending a class where reasoned arguments are exchanged or having a casual conversation with friends, universities are places where ideas thrive and knowledge is learned. Now, a tiny virus with a diameter of 120 nanometers (or 0.000000472 inches and something that requires an electron microscope to see) is causing worldwide disruption and threatening our collective future.

We will all get through this challenge. Yes, it is stressful. Yes, it is disruptive. Yes, tomorrow seems uncertain. But, I am confident that as Lakers we will show our resilience. We will confront the challenges in front of us, and do so as a University community. We will do so with the grace, the dignity, and the elegance that define you and have defined previous generations of Lakers. You know, there are characteristics about Lakers I want to share with you: Lakers are people who do not fear the future; who will not hide in the face of adversity; and who will not shrink from our duty to confront this threat. As Lakers, we will persevere and overcome this threat. We will support each other. We will exemplify kindness and resilience in these trying times. We will add to the rich tradition that helped bring us to where we are and forge ahead into the future.

Join me in doing what is necessary to stop this virus. Simple things such as washing your hands frequently, avoiding gathering in groups, and restricting our travel are now our collective responsibility. But I would also add it is important to be kind to others and to help those who are feeling stressed and anxious, especially older people. It is a time for Lakers to shine.

We can do this. We must do this. We will do this.

Best regards,

Rodney S. Hanley, Ph.D.
President