



SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
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Spring and Hope



Spring is coming.

We're all looking forward to Thanksgiving, the Great American Holiday! These warm traditions began with Pilgrims who, while thousands of miles from their homes and families, were grateful for the protection and blessings of Heaven and were united and confident they were building a new future for themselves and all who would come after them. Just a little like us, here, today.

We look forward to a wonderful new kind of Thanksgiving this year, here at our college home—a Thanksgiving like we've never had before. Then we'll finish classes, finish finals, and look forward to a warm, happy Christmas and the start of a new and better year.

I can't begin to tell you how proud we are of you all! You've been superb citizens and faithful friends. You've loved one another and kept one another safe while a storm of infection has swept most the world. We've made tremendous investments to protect from the pandemic, with new technology to clean and purify the air, daily medical masks to protect ourselves and everyone around us, our own new, fully certified, state-of-the-art COVID rapid testing and Resource Center right on campus, and outdoor classrooms and enhanced ventilation for more fresh outdoor air. We've created outdoor pavilion classrooms with full Wi-Fi, carpets, tables and chairs, and reconfigured classrooms and dining spaces for fresh air and safe distances. And you have been magnificent!—thoughtful of one another and carefully respecting the Four Pillars of our Healthy Campus Plan. As a result, we've had virtually no cases. Virtually none. Measured alongside other schools, it's a miracle!

We know there will be cases. The virus will find its way here and we will do our best to contain it when it comes. The key is to pay attention, report any symptoms, and get tested so we can isolate to protect others from being exposed. Protect yourself and others with masks and social distance. Avoid super-spreading by keeping to only a very small number of close contacts.

And after Thanksgiving, after Christmas, after the holiday break: Spring is coming!

During Spring Semester we want to start opening the door to normal life so we can gather and hang out, practice and perform, compete and have concerts. Vaccination and affordable rapid testing are the keys to open that door. We're pushing the boundaries to make this happen.

- **Vaccine:** We've offered to invest in the high-tech equipment needed—if our campus application is approved as an early vaccination center—to speed access to a new vaccine.
- **Testing:** We're working every possible option and source for next-generation rapid testing.

Technology is moving fast. We'll do everything possible to bring vaccination and/or rapid affordable testing here as soon as possible this Spring, so every team and every performing arts group and every club can have some opportunity to gather and practice, play, perform or compete during Spring Semester. February is our target to start to access one or both of these keys to begin opening the door back to normal life.

There are always opportunities in adversity!—and learning and growth. This is a critical year of testing and proving ourselves. Please believe in yourself. We believe in you. Keep progressing. Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep your college momentum. If you step away, it's hard to ever get it back. The whole world is searching for doers and finishers—young men and women who can fight a good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith. Faith in the Lord, and in yourself.

We're still in the storm, but the storm will end. There is "hope shining brightly before us!" This next semester and this next year will be remarkable times of renewal and refreshing. We'll have experiences and learn and grow in ways never again possible. We'll work together to make this the best and most memorable Spring ever. We can't wait!

We have much to look forward to. Thanksgiving is coming. Christmas break is coming. Christmas and New Year holidays and celebrations are coming. Spring is coming, with a fresh new semester, new friends and new opportunities.

We love you and are so very proud of all of you. Most of all, we're so very grateful for our greatest Hero, our dear Savior Jesus Christ. I know and am sure that He is just as real as we are. He walks and talks and sees and speaks. He knows and loves you. He always keeps His promises. I know He is truly our Best and Truest Friend!

And thanks to Him, Spring is coming!



Reed N. Wilcox
President
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