



SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE *of the* PRESIDENT
ONE UNIVERSITY HILL DRIVE, BUENA VISTA, VA 24416

We Will Win

A letter from Reed N. Wilcox
President
Southern Virginia University

We appreciate all of you. We consider you all our friends and partners. We can't wait until we can be together again in person, and share some of the remarkable experiences of these days.

I wanted to share two things: an image of campus and a letter, both attached below.

This image of campus reminds me of the story in Exodus of the children of Israel moving through the wilderness, a theme frequently referenced by Book of Mormon and other prophets as they journeyed through geographic and spiritual wilderness...

...guided and protected by *"the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night."*

- Exodus 13: 22





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COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. We've been working since March on overlapping levels of protection for our campus during this next school year. We are making our home here in the Shenandoah Valley as safe, healthy and happy as almost anywhere else we could be so that we keep moving ahead during the CV-19 storm. We're fighting the virus, and we will win.

1. Medical science. I believe the tide will begin to turn by Christmas. I came from the medical/pharmaceutical world. I've worked in antiviral medicine. I'm very familiar with the scientific powerhouse companies, including Pfizer, AstraZeneca/Oxford, and GSK/Sanofi, who are already amazingly far along in clinical trials. Exciting new biotechs such as Moderna and Novavax are as well. All are progressing into final Phase III clinical trials. All have highly promising vaccines. I strongly believe at least one new CV-19 vaccine will be approved as early as November or December, and become available by December or January. Several CV-19 drug treatments are on track for approval. Testing technology is moving fast. Like polio, smallpox, and measles, CV-19 will be tamed by medical science. In the meantime, we need to stay safe, stay optimistic, and keep moving ahead!

2. Our safe CleanTech, Healthy-Distanced facilities. We're reconfiguring classrooms, restaurants, hallways, public spaces, even the library to support the safe healthy distances required by the CDC and Virginia Dept of Health. We're adding state-of-the-art CleanTech True-HEPA air filtration in every classroom, dorm room, office, and public space on campus. We're adding advanced ionic virus neutralization technology to sanitize as well as filter the air. We'll keep cleaning and have disinfecting wipes and hand gel dispensers all across campus. We're even working to create, if possible, a few tent-topped outdoor classrooms. All these steps will help keep our campus home as safe or safer than almost anywhere else we could be.

3. Our new CV-19 Testing Center. By moving faster and ahead of most businesses and colleges, we now have the newest CV-19 testing equipment, supplies, and staffing to operate our own Certified Clinical test center for CV-19 and influenza. This state-of-the-art technology is very accurate, very fast, and very easy – painless – with results in minutes. A huge blessing!

4. Our safe Shenandoah Valley home. Nestled in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, our rural campus setting enjoys low population density, is distant from major travel hubs, and has some of the lowest rates of CV-19 in the country. In our own Rockbridge County and all eight surrounding counties and cities within fifty miles, the rates of CV-19 are among the very lowest in the nation – 88% fewer cases and 99% fewer hospitalizations and deaths per 100,000 than the national average (as low as the three or four lowest states in America).

5. Our smaller classes & close campus relationships. In small friendly classes professors and classmates notice and help when someone misses class and isn't feeling well. When someone falls ill and/or needs to quarantine or isolate for a week or two, our universal LaunchPad Initiative with the Apple iPad Pro system will be a huge advantage. With it, quarantined students can stay involved, professors can help, classes can be streamed, and food can be ordered and delivered.

6. Our campus culture. Aligned with the values and leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our school has a culture of being honest, clean and caring. The safest campus cultures today are among people who care for one another, who avoid other bad health risks like alcohol, drugs, tobacco and sexual promiscuity, and who are good citizens who respect regulations and laws that protect community health and welfare. These are our people. This is our culture. This year in particular, it will be a special shield and defense. It's a rare privilege to live in such a community, especially at a time like this.

7. Our safe harbor and shelter from the storm. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve gave a masterful Conference address* about finding safe harbors from the storms of the world. Section 115 of the Doctrine & Covenants talks about gathering to the stakes of Zion for shelter from the storms to come.** Our University's mission is to be a safe harbor, a place of safe gathering and mutual support and shelter from spiritual storms. It works as we work together to protect the special spirit of this place, and seek by the way we live to be worthy of Heaven's help and protection. This year being honest, clean and kind will be more important than ever. This year our mission includes being a shelter from the virus storms, as well as the spiritual storms.

This will be a once-in-a-generation year, a rare opportunity to learn and grow. Don't waste it. Don't miss it. Don't fall a year behind. Keep learning and growing. Please be careful, please be safe, please think of others, and keep moving ahead. It won't be normal, and it won't always be easy. But this will be a remarkable, once-in-a-generation experience. Those who miss it will wish they hadn't. The unique challenges and opportunities of this year will never come again.

Our goal for this year is to be the happiest, healthiest, safest home possible, a shelter from both the medical and spiritual storms of life. If you're ready to be part of something great, and to come together as part of a great team with one heart, one mind, and no poor among us – no poor in spirit, no poor in friends, no poor in faith – then come and be with us, and take one more step toward our true destination: Zion, the pure in heart.

We can't wait to see you in four weeks!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reed N. Wilcox', with a large, stylized initial 'R' and 'W'.

Reed N. Wilcox
President
Southern Virginia University

* Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, Finding a Safe Harbor, April, 2000 General Conference.

** Doctrine & Covenants, Section 115: 5-6.