March 18, 2020

Hello, William Jewell Students and Parents:

As you all know, the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic widens daily, requiring community health guidelines to shift in response. As of this moment, Clay County Health officials have placed a stricture on gatherings greater than ten people; restaurants and theaters in Clay County and across the city are either closed or offering limited services; the CDC is predicting that local healthcare systems may soon be overrun with patients; and confirmed COVID-19 cases are increasing across the metro. In other words, the pandemic is emergent, not contained—and communal living, even within a highly controlled and clean environment, is not advised.

For this reason, we are suspending residential living on our campus beginning immediately. We are asking students living on The Hill currently to move home as quickly as possible. Students currently off site will be allowed to return to campus and collect their belongings in a structured fashion over the next few weeks. Ernie Stufflebean will be sending a follow-up email this evening with instructions on when students may return as well as the health and safety protocols we will have in place during the move-out process. Please note that we will provide storage, at no cost, for students who cannot return to campus. Our Jewell Facilities Team also stands ready to assist our students in moving their belongings. Finally, we will accommodate students with an acute need to remain in Jewell housing—for example, international students—on a case-by-case basis.

We have, to date, adopted the stance that William Jewell is our students’ home, and therefore our residential facilities should be available to students during this crisis. While it always will remain true that Jewell is home, we must acknowledge that living in residential facilities could increase the likelihood of exposure or contagion. We are taking this step to protect our students, our employees, and our larger community.

I want our students to know that, as you leave campus, you carry the thoughts and prayers of the entire Jewell family with you. This is not goodbye; it is merely an extended separation that will, one day in the future, end. In the meantime, we will continue to deliver our outstanding curriculum virtually, support one another from afar, and remember that, no matter where we are, every day is a great day to be a Cardinal.

Deo Fisus Labora,

Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, Ph.D.
President