

**STAFF SENATE
CHAIR'S REPORT
OCTOBER 13, 2020**

We are happy that Kent Gardner will represent us on the search for a new Executive Director of Planning and Design. That will be a crucial hire for the university and we are confident in Kent's representation of us in that process. Kent has been involved in a number of construction and renovation projects on the Health Sciences Center Campus and will bring a depth of experience to the committee.

The number of staff still on furlough is down to 16. The state has a requirement to pre-register furloughed staff on what has become known as the "Ford Plan" of having a minimum of 25 furloughed staff. That means the staff remaining on furlough will have to do their own filing every two weeks and that HR will no longer be allowed to perform the pre-approval they have been doing. HR has contacted every staff member still on furlough and made sure they are aware of the change. They have also offered their assistance in any way the staff person may need.

The second round of required covid testing for students, faculty and staff is underway and goes through Friday. Voluntary testing will remain for at least the remainder of the semester so please don't confuse that with this round of required testing. I don't know about the lines in other locations but it is rare for there to be more than 6-8 in line at the SRC so if you need a quick place, come to my place! Here is the link with all the information.

<https://louisville.edu/coronavirus/health-protocols#testing>

Construction on the "New Miller Hall" is on time and on budget. That facility should be completed in July of 2021. When it is occupied, it will trigger a domino reaction that will include occupants of Threlkeld Hall moving to the "Old Miller Hall." Threlkeld being torn down. A new Threlkeld being built on the current site. Occupants of the "Old Miller Hall" moving to the "New Threlkeld Hall." And finally the demolition of the "Old Miller Hall." Some units like the Honors Program will have temporary homes, most likely in the Library, during some of those times.

The biggest debate on the Spring semester taking place right now is the schedule. Most schools across the nation have eliminated Spring Break and opted for a later January start. Eliminating Spring Break greatly reduces travel and the subsequent spike in infections places saw last year. I feel confident that we will do that but

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the decision that still has to be made is whether to have two, three day weekends, two days off in the middle of a couple different weeks, a four day weekend or no days off for students at all. Each has some particular benefit and risk. A day off in the middle of a week really doesn't give the student much of a breather. A long weekend is good but many labs etc. meet on Fridays and eliminating two Fridays may cause issues there. A four day weekend provides the best chance for a student to catch up if they need to and get a good mental break but also may present a greater risk for increased infection rates if many students elect to travel. There are several groups giving input and opinions to the university on this. A decision will be made soon. Everyone understands that the spring calendar needs to be finalized soon.

I need to give kudos to our committees. Virtually every committee is highly engaged and more "in the weeds" than I have witnessed since joining the senate 8 or 9 years ago. To have across the board engagement like we are seeing, in the time of our greatest challenge, is really amazing. We heard from an important ad hoc today. Our standing committees are all deeply engaged and exploring new ways for their committees to advance different ideas. University wide committees are meeting again and getting good information to different areas of our campuses. To see this happening at this point in our history is so encouraging. We can all use some encouragement right now.