

## UWL Joint Statement with Viterbo and WTC Colleagues

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Wed 6/10/2020 8:30 AM

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La-Crosse-Higher-Ed-Shared-Statement.pdf;

Dear colleagues and students:

I'm pleased to share the attached public statement written jointly with President Glenna Temple of Viterbo University and President Roger Stanford of Western Technical College. Representing the institutions of higher education in La Crosse, we stated together it is our intention for students, staff and faculty to return to campus in a safe and sensible manner, in accordance with the latest guidance from the CDC and the La Crosse County Health Department; and in our case, State leadership and UW System. Our highest priority remains the health and safety of those on our campus and in our community. I'm certain many of you have questions and concerns about what that means for the fall semester at UW-La Crosse.

Ideally, my colleagues on the University leadership team and I would share with you our complete and comprehensive plan for returning to campus. But nothing about the COVID-19 pandemic has been ideal. Creating a plan that works for all of us requires a tremendous amount of collaboration, consideration — and above everything else — time. We realize you may be experiencing a mix of emotions, including excitement, anxiety and a desire for clarity about the fall semester. We trust many of your questions will be answered as we share additional details in the coming weeks. We appreciate your patience as we work to define and communicate those answers.

We believe that some in-person classes can safely resume, and that students can once again learn and live together. While we look forward to a return to the familiar, we also cannot forget that COVID-19 remains a significant threat to our campus and community. With this in mind, we are developing a comprehensive health and safety plan that will include elements such as social distancing, the use of masks, and close coordination with local health experts. These policies and procedures have begun to take shape and will continue as we gain a clearer picture of the health and safety issues on the horizon.

While we do the important work of preparing for the fall semester, we encourage you to take time to reflect on the many challenges of the past few months. Because of the resilience, innovation and tireless work of our campus community, we rose to meet every challenge and completed a spring semester unlike anything in our university's 111-year history. That's a truly remarkable accomplishment, and one that should be celebrated.

Finally, we realize there is no plan that will please everyone. Some of you may want our campus to return to normal as quickly as possible. Others may want us to move slowly, taking every precaution at our disposal. In matters of health and safety, we will always do everything in our power to safeguard the wellbeing of our students, staff and faculty. As the leader of our university, I also realize we have a crucial educational mission we must pursue. Our goal is to create a plan that is robust but flexible.

We respectfully ask that you do your part to help keep our community safe. And we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Joe

Joe Gow, Chancellor  
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse