

ALUMNI TOWN HALL

THURSDAY MAY 7, 2020

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. *Will Tipi Village still happen at Homecoming in the fall?*
 - Anticipate traditional big events on campus to look a little different in terms of attendance. We may have limitations and may have to look at more intimate settings and how we can properly social distance during events.
 - That being said, we believe that the tipi tours will be almost logistically impossible to do that at this time. We are not anticipating having tours at this time.
 - School superintendents looking at how to reopen the local ISD's, so we do not see them attending tipi tours.

2. *How did the COVID-19 situation impact the withdraw rate this spring semester? Was it any higher than previous spring semesters?*
 - This spring was about the same as in a normal spring. We typically have 10-14ish and this spring we had 15, although 3 of those were student affairs disciplinary related. I do think we probably had more dropped classes this spring, but not total withdrawals.

3. *What are the fall enrollment statistics for new freshmen and transfer students looking like at this point? How do those numbers compare to this same time last year?*
 - Right now, new enrollment and retention numbers are down about a total of 15-20%.
 - We are projecting approximately 200 first-year students. This is a decrease from last year where we had approximately 255 students.

4. *Should McMurry not meet budgeted enrollment goals, what financial plan is in place? What steps might be taken to mitigate a significant shortfall?*
 - We have secured PPP Loan (Paycheck Protection Program) and received \$2.5 million which provides two months of payroll.
 - We have access to some funds from our endowment, but any money borrowed will have to be paid back. We are trying to refrain from this option.
 - Other discussions being had at this point are not any different from what you can assume and have probably heard other schools announce. They include furloughs, budget cuts, salary cuts, and in the worst case scenario layoffs.
 - Planning for a 15-20% decrease, that's what they are projecting nationally. Our projections are right in line with that.
 - Have asked team to look at a number of different scenarios, 15-20%, flat enrollment with only half of the people in the residence halls, fall sports, all online, etc.
 - Even with the best case scenario (15%), we are talking about



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significant sacrifice to manage the revenue shortfall.

- Budget committee meeting in the coming weeks to look at various scenarios. Our major source of revenue is enrollment, if it is down we have to look at trimming costs.
- Board executive committee is meeting every two weeks to help us move through this.

5. What COVID-19 related risk and liability might exist by opening campus for the fall semester?

- Just as the rest of the world and Texas, we risk exposure to the virus by opening for face-to-face instruction in the fall. But we feel it is critical to begin working toward Reopening in alignment with state of Texas and city of Abilene guidelines. We will follow public health guidelines and local, state and national government mandates.
- May term will be face-to-face for seven classes allowing the opportunity to evaluate screening processes with a smaller group. We can adjust as needed with a smaller group as we proceed through Summer 1 and Summer II terms before returning in the fall.
- For May term, the university is taking steps and precautions to avoid these risks . Protocols in place include:
 1. Social distancing in the classroom: spreading out seats
 2. Prior to arriving at campus personal screening checklist
 3. Hand sanitizer stations when entering classes
 4. Wearing of masks during class
 5. Cleaning classrooms following classes

As we plan for the fall, we are considering scenarios that may include:

1. Limits in the residence halls (no roommates)
 2. Adding class sections to ensure social distancing can be enforced
 3. Altering sports schedules and limiting attendance of traditional big events on campus: sports schedules will be based on NCAA and ASC guidance
- In the end, we are in the business of serving our students. Our students are craving in-person educational experiences and they want to be back on campus, so we are doing our best to accommodate. But we are being very precautionary and mindful about the risks involved and the best way to accomplish this.

6. What opportunities have campus offices taken to update current processes during these remote times? For example, processes that could only be done with a hard copy form previously, that now need an online or remote option in order to maintain operations and student services.

- Academic advising -
- SOAR -
- We are becoming experts at virtual meetings via MS Teams and Zoom.
- 90% of our staff and 100% of our faculty are working remotely.



This has allowed us the opportunity to update some processes and rethink others.

- Most of our hard copy forms if they weren't already, are now available digitally.
- The biggest change and success has come from the faculty. Faculty had to take 75% of an in-person semester and go online in a matter of two weeks. It was very challenging, and there were some hiccups, but we persevered. I was astounded at the way the campus community came together to support and help each other to be successful. I am proud to see how the McMurry campus took this challenge in stride and came out successfully on top.

7. *Chanters and Band, will scholarships still be honored?*

- Yes scholarships will still be honored. We are hoping that we can make smaller ensemble group performances work. We're also looking at other areas that may be effected and looking at how to redesign the courses to provide the best student experience.

8. *How can the alumni community better support McMurry and its students during this time, as well as during the future "bounce back"?*

- During this challenging time, the alumni community can support McMurry as a whole in three ways:
 1. Give. If you are able, make a gift to McMurry Scholarship Fund. Any gifts made to this fund will be unrestricted dollars and can be used or allocated as we need or see fit.
 2. Share. Share the McMurry story and how we impacted your life. You never know who is listening or who may be on the fence about their next step. You can be the piece that helps put a student at McMurry.
 3. Pray. Pray for the McMurry community, pray for Texas, pray for the nation and pray for the world that this ends soon.

9. *Has the Student Center project been put on hold?*

- The student center was a big priority and is still a big priority for us. The upgrades and renovations of the student center are being put on hold at this point and the Board of Trustees will look at that again in 6 months to see where we are. The second phase of Goldstar renovation has been put on hold. The first phase was completed last summer with the second set to happen this summer. Liquidity is important, so we are preserving capital as much as we can. The second phase is now set for next summer, 2021.

10. *Does the 90% of staff working remotely include student employees?*

- Believe so. Some students were here because they wanted to be here. Some students deemed being on campus preferable to their permanent residence (financial, internet access, jobs, etc.). If the student workers were in that group, then they were



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able to continue work on campus. Some students were allowed to work remotely if we could assign.

11. *Has the ASC said anything yet about fall Sports?*

- No. the ASC will have a meeting of the council of presidents the last week in May. We'll review their decision and see what fall sports will look like. Hoping to have more guidance for NCAA by then as well.
- Theme of the NCAA guidance is called the resocialization plan. NCAA is a national organization, so there are areas that have been affected much worse than us. Their calculator may look a little different.
- Athletic Directors met yesterday and discussed how we limit travel and help student athletes, for example moving schedules to limit travel and having geographic divisional competition.
- Many questions right now about what we will do. It's too early to tell.
- COVID-19 NCAA task force currently looking at how do we reopen or continue our intercollegiate athletics in a safe manner. Resocialization of sport. First mandate is for each campus to have a resocialization plan that conforms to NCAA guidelines. Athletics staff beginning on that plan on Friday, May 8.
- A lot of variables that the NCAA is looking at. Too early to speculate. We do not believe that they will have a mandate of no sports in the fall, but it depends a lot on how the virus plays out during the summer.

12. *Is there anything specifically we as alumni (aside from normal things) can do to help retain/recruit students during this time?*

- The most direct way to assist with student recruitment is to advocate and promote our university to your community.
- Refer potential students to the office admission, admissions.mcm.edu, and our staff will begin to engage with the student and nurture that relationship.
- Contributions to student scholarships can further enhance and support the university's recruitment outreach by providing competitive awards to deserving students.
- Finally, we can always use more McMurry Alumni to help connect with students, send short notes, place calls to congratulate admits, and represent the institution at college fairs. If you may be interested in volunteering your time please fill out the volunteer form at join.mcm.edu/alumniadmissions and our staff will contact you with ways you can help.

13. *How do admission/deposit numbers look compared to prior years?*

- Right now, 20% down from last year. Nationally, 1 in 5 students are saying they are going to take a gap year. We're seeing it pan out at 20% which is the national estimate right now.



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14. *What initiatives are being taken to compliment a virtual SOAR to ensure incoming students feel a personal connection and a sense of belonging to the University?*

SOAR OVERVIEW

1. A synchronous opening session with break out groups. Each break-out group will be led by one of our Orientation Team (O-Team) members (current students). This is intentionally being created to help build relationships.
2. As part of the SOAR experience we are including a few videos that are highlighting some of the faculty and staff and students at McMurry.
 - a. Welcome Video
 - b. FYS Video
 - c. Student Services Video
3. As part of the SOAR experience each student will have an individualized meeting with a SOAR academic advisor where they are able to receive their fall class schedule and make any needed changes.
4. As part of the SOAR experience each student will have an individualized meeting with a Financial Aid counselor.
5. The Academic Department Chairs will receive a list of all of the students who have indicated a major from their department on the SOAR Gen Ed Preference survey, so that they can reach out to the students.
6. Later in the summer each first-year student will receive a letter from their First Year Seminar faculty member, introducing themselves and the course.
7. Each Orientation Team member has provided us with a success tip that we are planning to use as part of the social media connection with the new students. Our Orientation Team and Co-Directors have been brainstorming other ways to connect to the students via social media and intentional community building.
8. In partnership with the Admissions Office, we are hosting a SOAR 101 session (May 22nd) that will express our excitement for new student arrival, outline the SOAR process, provide space for them to make a connection with the Orientation Student Co-Directors (current McMurry University upperclassmen).

SOAR Week

In the SOAR week, specifically, we are looking to host a live and interactive session via Zoom to kick off the week, give further instruction, answer any last-minute questions, and connect students to our Orientation Team (O-Team). Our hope is to utilize the breakout room function to allow students an opportunity to engage with their Orientation Team members. This will be a space that students are able to bond student-to-student. Our O-Team members will facilitate a quick energizer ice-breaker, facilitate the breakout room discussion, and connect students to our social media pages. (Both the McMurry U and Orientation pages.)

Social Media & Other Engagement

In our last O-Team training session, our team brainstormed ways to engage the new students. Here are some ideas. We won't do all of them,



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but we will select a few and run with them.

- Live games via Instagram (Kahoot) and offering prizes to winners
- Netflix/ Disney+ Parties
- Picture Scavenger Hunt
- Tik-Tok Competitions
- New Student Spotlights
- New Student Success Tips

15. Can the Alumni Association help by writing letters to new students?

A webform is being launched to capture alumni interest. Click here to join and support recruitment. <http://join.mcm.edu/alumniadmissions>

