

# WSU COVID-19 Staff Town Hall – July 31

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>> PHIL WEILER: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to our eighth WSU COVID Town Hall session. I am Phil Wyler, I will be the host today, vice President for marketing and communications break I went to welcome you and thank you for joining us from across the state of Washington and from around the country. We are just a couple of weeks away from the start of the semester and things are starting to definitely fall in place for fall and this is a great opportunity for us to talk with you are. I wanted to say one thing, we will do things a little bit differently this time around. In the past, these have been systemwide conversations for parents, students, faculty, staff, members of the community as well. This time around, we will focus primarily on faculty and staff and we will be talking specifically about what the financial implications of the pandemic might be for WSU and how it will impact our budget. Keep that in mind. The other thing I want to say is we received comments from a couple of folks last week regarding the chat function. It was really busy last week and that was great. I am looking at the chat function now and I'm happy to see folks connecting and from all over the country. I see Austin, Texas, Southern California and the like. I encourage you as we get started, feel free to make your comments to folks, but once we start with the panelists, we have a couple of requests from viewers that there was so much activity in the chat they could not get their questions answered. As we have been in the past, we have subject matter experts who are monitoring the chat and they will try and answer your questions live there pick up after the other thing I noted, personally, was there was a lot abject going on between folks and they were not necessarily able to follow along with the panelists. There were questions the panelists had addressed that people missed because they may have been on the chat. If you have a specific question that you need to get answered right away, use the chat or subject matter experts will answer as quickly as possible. I encourage you to tune in to what our panelists have to say and I think we can go ahead and get started. Let me introduce our panelists today. First, we have WSU President Kirk Schulz. Thank you for joining us. We have Elizabeth Chilton, our Provost and Executive Vice President. Elizabeth, is it day 12? Less than two weeks in. Welcome and we are glad to have you with us. We have Stacy Pearson who is our Vice President for finance and administration and finally Teresa Elliott who is our President for human resource services. Thank you panelists for joining us. I will kick it off by asking President Schulz if you has any opening comments for us.

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: Hello Cougs and welcome and thank you for joining us. We appreciate our faculty and staff that are with us today as well as everybody else who is joining and. Philip mentioned about that comments last week and I heard quite a few things send our direction about the tone of the comments last week. Just continue to ask as we want to keep this open as possible, but keep your comments civil and it lets make sure that we get all of the questions answered that we can and give our Cougs that is off-line as this is an opportunity to get in front of you. We appreciate that our decision, as a university, to go to an online

instructional format is difficult for some families, for some of folks, but I have heard from Cougs this week saying that is not what I had hoped for. I wanted to be in Pullman and I wanted to be on campus, but if I cannot be there, I saw some cool pictures where families decided to take bedrooms and turn them into dorm rooms and put up Cougs gear and memorabilia. It talks about the Cougs spirit that what people are doing is they may be disappointed, but what they are doing is figuring out good and creative ways to make that experience all you could be. I also want to remind everybody that we learned a lot in the spring term when we had to switch in such a short timeframe. A lot of our faculty and staff have been working most of the summer to get us ready to go. Everybody else now has about a month to pivot and work to making sure that the course that they deliver, the course and the interaction they have with you all students and our faculty do this, it is a high-quality experience. It is the best that it can possibly be. I think last semester, sometimes we heard that students and others did not fail people were flexible enough or they had challenges with the Internet or there were some particular issue. We will put a hotline together for the fall semester that will be a web-based and phone -based tool so if someone has some issues, you don't have to look around where to find information. There will be one place you can go and it will be up to us to distribute and get back to whatever support you need to be successful. We want it to be a great, high quality Cougs experience and we will do everything we can to make sure that comes to pass. I look forward to interacting with everyone today and before I turn it back over to Phil, let me express my appreciation to faculty and staff as this is an uncertain time for them. As our students and families are trying to deal with what is going to happen next, what is the impact of COVID 19, our faculty and staff are doing the same thing. They are worried about can they do the job they want to interacting with students online? I think the answer to that is it will be different, but yes they will be ready to do that. They also want to be in a safe environment as well. I think we have to look out for our students, but we also look out for our faculty and staff. I appreciate your flexibility, I appreciate your willingness to pivot and turn and to keep working really hard. We have a world-class faculty and staff at WSU and I think that will come out and be shown once again in the fall term just how great our people are across all of our campuses. Phil, thank you and I look forward to interacting today and thank you everyone for joining in.

>> PHIL WEILER: Thank you, you mention the debt has shared photos with us. In case the dad is watching, his son is a freshman and Casey was looking forward to joining us on the Pullman campus and will not be able to do that. They didn't awesome job at about fitting Casey's room make it a virtual WSU dorm room. Casey and Patrick, if you are watching, we are looking forward to the time that Casey can join us in person. That was pretty cool. Kirk, you talked about the fact that we are making the switch from face-to-face instruction to remote learning. I know there has been some anxiety both among parents and students about is that going to be an inferior experience. Can you touch a little bit on what the difference is in your mind between remote learning and face-to-face?

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: There certainly will be key differences and I think as a President, as a faculty member, I have had to adjust to doing a lot more of my interactions with peers, colleagues, with presidents and chancellors around the country all the same way. We have learned how to do it a little better, we have learned how to do it more effectively, but it is not

like when I meet with someone now that it is a horrible meeting or an effective meeting. I want to remind people it is the same thing as this is not an inferior product. I want to remind folks that we are not going back to lectures done 10 years ago on a videotape and putting them up there, this is a world-class faculty on all of our campuses that are doing live classes, updated materials and interacting with students on a very regular basis. I think people want to conflate inferior and different. Yes, it will be a different experience. I mentioned before that we have learned some things like the hotline to make sure we are meeting students needs, but some of the other things that Provost Chilton will talk about is the great step we are doing to prepare first year students to make sure the online experience is really get. Our student affairs folks have really worked to make sure we are going to have a fantastic experience with clubs and other types of things for our students. When people talk about they will be lacking some part of their educational enterprise, it will not be the same as in person, but we are doing everything we can to bring forward a virtual experience that we think is not just conveying of material, but it is an educational experience that we think or I believe is high-quality with world-class faculty, life and in real-time. We think it will be a great experience for students.

>> PHIL WEILER: I agree. Thank you, Kirk. Elizabeth come if I could I would love to turn to you and talk more about this. One of the things I have seen over the last week since we made our decision to look at distance learning was a perception that WSU was going to be saving money because we were teaching via distance learning versus face-to-face instruction. Is that the case?

>> ELIZABETH CHILTON: Thank you for the question Phil and for those who sent in the question. Certainly, it is not less expensive and more specifically, as someone who has taught courses in both remote environment and face to face, it is actually much more challenging and many more hours in the case of the faculty who had been planning all summer to do a hybrid environment even planning for the pandemic. In the past week, they have had to imagine and will continue to work with us to move their classes remotely. Faculty are still providing live instruction, most of them at this point in time, and they are making themselves available to faculty as President has said. They are interacting with them one-on-one ended groups. We are investing heavily in training and supplementary technology to provide the best possible remote learning experience. I do want to sort of add to what President Schulz was saying, I tend to not use the word online. I use the word remote. Online teaching is a whole form of pedagogy that is developed over the past couple of decades. Where classes are developed from the start to be intended to be really instructor less in the sense that all of the work happens upfront and then you push the go button, so to speak, and it is an automated format. In that case, once you design the course, it does not take much touch to keep it going. That is not what we are offering. We are offering remote instruction that needs constant care and attention to make sure that students are still getting the same high-quality learning outcomes out of their experience.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Elizabeth. I agree. This is something that we talked about at some of our earlier Town Hall is that the effect WSU actually has a pretty deep set of experiences around delivery and education both in the online environment, as you just described, but also using distance learning techniques. I think we are fortunate to be well-

positioned to have made that switch back in March when we needed to and now I know we have been having groups of faculty members working all summer long, looking at best practices and ways to take face-to-face curriculum and really deliver it in a very high-quality manner in an online or remote environment. I think that is good. As I mentioned at the start, the intent of this particular Town Hall is really going to be geared to faculty and staff and talking about budget implications. With that, Stacy, if I can turn the question over to you, can you tell us what kind of financial impact has WSU experience so far due to the pandemic and do we have any guesses about what the future may hold?

>> STACY PEARSON: Sure. My computer went out for a moment. Yes, so basically what we have received so far that is more certain news, if you will, is the state of Washington has asked for WSU to have a 37 million-dollar reduction. That is what we have been planning on. At this point in time, we are not expecting to see an additional reductions from the state and less there was to be a special session and that certainly could change. We know of none plan at this current time. We are working off at that particular number. In addition, obviously we have had impacts from COVID both when classes went remote in the spring and we also refunded some housing funds and all of that. The good news is we did receive federal funding through the CARES Act as well as recently, also from state emergency funding to help us get through fiscal year 2020. For fiscal year 21, it is a little less certain just because we don't know the status of some of those federal funds related to COVID, but we are keeping track of those expenses and monitoring them. They are focused on things like online delivery as well as some of the impacts on our auxiliary operations. The other impact is we are just entering fall term and with all of the uncertainties and the announcement of remote, we are watching our enrollments very carefully to see how they go. We are currently averaging about the same enrollment that we have on average over the last three or four years. Down slightly from last year, the last couple of years we had quite a bit of enrollment and that plays a huge impact on our budget. We will be monitoring those also. Then we also -- related to the 37 million, the University announced budget hearings in which we assign a target for each area of 10 percent of their operating budget. It went through three days of budget hearings where everybody gave their proposals on those budgets and then we have since reviewed those. I should also note WSU's fiscal year end is June 30 and takes us a good month to close out our books so that would be today. We were able to tell that do to our fiscal recovery, we made enough progress that we felt we could allow areas to use 5 percent of their carryforward funds to help offset the fiscal year 21 budget reductions. Areas are looking into that right now as we finalize that information.

>> PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Stacy. I know we will talk more about fiscal impact so I appreciate you getting that conversation started. Teresa, I will ask the next question have you and this is something that I saw, we had about 300 questions submitted in advance and this was one of the questions I saw from quite a few staff members. The question was now that we have made the decision to use distance learning, what does that mean for WSU staff? Are they going to be asked to return to their campuses or should they be continuing to work remotely?

>> THERESA ELLIOT-CHESLEK Great. Hello everyone. Employees still continue to work from a remote location or teleworking when possible and those employees who cannot telework

without hampering operation should be allowed to do so. Any employee who is directed to come to the WSU location if they have a process to raise those concerns, but we are still in the mode of most employees are working at an alternate location for teleworking.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great, thank you Theresa. Kurt, this next question is addressed to you. I am looking at the chat and I see a lot of questions and comments from parents and students and a lot of questions about housing on campus. Because this particular town hall is geared toward faculty and staff, do we have any upcoming town halls that will be geared more toward students and parents?

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: Absolutely, these hour-long sessions, it is hard to get to all of the different topics and audiences that we want. On August 12 at 5:30 p.m., student affairs is going to have another one of these type of town halls to specifically address things around student fees and housing and some of those types of things. We will continue to make sure that as we get more information that we update our COVID-19 webpages and things like that. Phil, we will have additional opportunities for people to ask questions moving forward. These are on some of the topics we are not really addressing today and that. Part of the reason that I think people can say what is taking so long? How long does it take to make these decisions? When we look at any kind of fee or any type of financial issue, Stacy and her team Mary Jo Gonzalez, Vice President of student affairs do a lot of modeling work to make sure that we understand if we do something, what impact does that have on students and what does that have on faculty and what is the impact on operations? We want to make sure we are careful, we spend the time to understand what those repercussions are. Is a quick example, there are some of the dollars that come in through things as fees and other things that support a lot of employees. You can say that is an easy decision, Kirk, just don't do this when. We have to look and make sure we understand what all of the repercussions are on any of these types of decisions. People get frustrated saying why don't we have the stuff today? We want to take our time, make sure we understand it and we typically have clear processes for how we have to evaluate this and we went to go through those and be very careful. We will continue to do these town halls and there will be specialties in special areas and we want to make sure to answer as many questions as we can in a timely fashion.

>> PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Kirk. Something that you said in regard to fees, many times the fees are supporting programming, those are student employees that are benefiting from those. I think the point you made is a really good one that any decision has it ripples. We want to make sure there are not an intended consequences that may disadvantage students, for example. If we want to run a program, does that mean a student who is relying on work-study or student employment would be negatively impacted? That is a good point. The other thing I will say about some of our other Town Halls is that each of our campuses has been running Town Halls over the summer. I know that Vancouver has one scheduled for next week, I believe that Everett has one on August 11 if I remember correctly. If you are a student or a parent connected with a particular campus, I strongly encourage you to pay close attention to your e-mail and also take a look on a regular basis at the websites for each individual campus that you or your student may be going to. The chances are there will be a Town Hall over the next couple

of weeks that will address some specific issues to your particular campus. Elizabeth, if I could move on to you, this is actually an academic kind of question. I know we had talked about making the fall 2020 schedule available soon. Can you tell us what the status of that is and when students might get a sense of what classes will be offered remotely?

>> PROVOST ELIZABETH CHILTON: Absolutely. We had said that a full fall schedule for undergraduate and graduate students would be available by August 1. We are on track to do that. It was just a week ago yesterday that we announced the move to mostly remote instruction so our faculty and department chairs and deans have been working very closely with me. I did mention last week at the town hall that we were already planning to offer most of our courses in a remote environment because we were planning on a hybrid course delivery. It was just really looking at that remaining 20 percent or so that had still be planned to be face to face. I have ran an exception process where faculty would contact my office and my staff and I would take a look. If they felt that it was the kind of course that bid we are required for seniors, that would be impossible to deliver remotely because of the specialized equipment we would also take a look at the plan that they had to maintain the social distancing. As well as other kinds of protections for the health of the staff and faculty and students. We have only denied requests for a few of these courses where we just felt it was something that we -- either we could accommodate remotely or that we were not going to be able to accommodate in person. We work with the faculty to make sure the courses are available in another form or future date for students. We don't want to slow down anyone's graduation or keep them from making progress in their degree.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great I'm a thank you Elizabeth. Stacy, next question I want to turn over to you. You mention a second to go that in the May and June timeframe each college and campus, each unit was charged with coming up with plans for how they would take a 10 percent reduction in their State of appropriations so that we could cover that 37 point \$2 million the state is asking. Can you to share with us some examples of what approaches the campus and colleges are taking in order to recognize the savings they need to make?

>> STACY PEARSON: Certainly. All of the areas, campuses, colleges and administrative units were given a target and a template to complete. What we saw and the budget hearings or the areas they are considering a number of options including vacant positions. In other words, savings, because they have a budgeted position that is vacant and they want fail. A lot of operation reductions. We are saving on travel and those types of things, utilities and then also FTE reductions and furloughs. There was a variety of options that came through. Ultimately, when we get the final target numbers, which includes the ability to use 5 percent of the carry forward an amount that they carried forward from the last fiscal year, each areas leadership will determine how to absorb the final reduction as they prepare for budgets, only for fiscal year 21, but our message from the state when we received our reduction is that they anticipated based on the economic indicators that we would probably be looking at these types of reductions for the next two fiscal years also.

>> PHIL WEILER: That is a not something that is going to be over anytime soon for us and that is a good point. Theresa, there is anxiety among faculty and staff about what this means for their employment and Stacy mentioned the term furlough. As I have seen and looked at the questions, I've seen people use furlough and layoff interchangeably. My understanding is they have different definitions. Can you share with us what is the difference between a furlough and a layoff?

>> THERESA ELLIOT-CHESLEK: Yes, that is a good question, Phil. Furloughs are tying off without pay and at the end of that temporary furlough, an employee would come back to their regular job and FGP. And layoff is some sort of reduction and would trigger bumping. If a person goes through a layoff, they would be separated from the University and they would not be appointed back to their job. That is more of a permanent solution as to the furlough being temporary.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great, thank you. I know that furloughs was an option that was looked at. Do we know what the status of furloughs are at this point in time?

>> THERESA ELLIOT-CHESLEK: At this time, there are some areas that may be looking at furloughs as a means to address budget reductions, but an overall furlough program for the entire University has been put on hold. Areas may be implement in them as needed. One thing to note is there is a maximum of 30 day furlough per calendar year for WSU employees.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Stacy, was there anything you wanted to add to that?

>> STACY PEARSON: Just a couple of things, when it comes to furlough, our self-support exhilarate operations who basically operate based on the revenues that they receive are programs that may have to look at those actions in order to reach their budget. They are not funded by state appropriations. That might be important to note. When the time is right, I was going to say there are also other things we are doing, looking at programs that we can discontinue, but also how we may set aside some additional reserves centrally to kind of hedge egg and some of the future budget reductions as well as looking at our outstanding bonds and debt. Interest rates are very low so the institutions are looking at how to restructure their debt to lower the operating payments each year. Many additional activities are going on in addition to the budget reductions.

>> PHIL WEILER: Stacy, you made an important distinction between positions that are funded through state appropriation versus what we refer to as an auxiliary service. For the benefit of viewers, if they are not familiar with what an auxiliary is, it is a service that is completely funded by the fees they charge. For example, housing and dining does not receive any financial support from WSU, it is completely funded through the rental rates to use on-campus housing, apartments and residence halls. Dining is funded through those who pay to eat in the dining halls. That is a difference and it is an important nuance when we look at how different positions are paid for. President Schultz, if I can go back to you, I know that we have made an important decision last week to move to distance learning. Now, the question people have on their minds

is what will we do in the spring and when will we know whether we will be face to face or virtual?

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: Phil, thank you. Before I moved to answer that question, we have our faculty and staff with us today and I think we have talked about some details that Stacy has laid out where we are with the budget. People always have this impending sense of doom when dealing with budget issues. How come we cannot have a more firm set of numbers on what the people will do? We will pledge to keep the campus or campuses as informed as possible about where things are, but we are just as uncertain as many people are. Until we know what the actual enrollment is, we don't know what the tuition revenue is and we don't know exactly what some of the budget things will look like. It is not just what is happening at the state, but also internally what is happening. There is uncertainty and that and we will know more and September about where those things are. To our faculty and staff, if I look back as I have been a President since the last recession, and so often you all hear from your leadership that we are just going to do more with less. We are just going to roll up our sleeves and we will just make it all happen. I appreciate the fact we have a dedicated set of employees who want to do that, but we have got to temper our expectations for what people will do. You cannot cut out several hundred people who will no longer open positions that we are not filling and expect we can do the same sort of things. Faculty and staff are typically overachievers, they work really hard and they want to make sure that we have the least impact to our students and least impact to their colleagues. I appreciate that. It is great. At the same time, we have to make sure that we just don't get out there and say we are going to expect to do a 100 percent of what we did before and 90 percent of the budget. High will continue to reiterate this all year and I think it is important we remember that. Again, in the last recession for those who are around, when you wind up cutting a colleague who you don't feel their position and they leave or something like that, you feel a little bit that first year and then three years out is when you really really feel that. I appreciate the fact that a lot of people cap open positions and are keeping as much of the workforce as we can, but this is a few years from now that we will fill the real impacts of not filling some of the positions. As your leadership team, we want to do the best we can to provide the support you need, but at the same time we have to also acknowledge there will be some things we will not be able to do in the same form or fashion as we did before. In terms of neck spring, we had several groups and when we talk to them said why don't you just make a decision for Spring 2021 right away and why wait? Everybody would then know. We still value and want to find a way to do more of our in person experiences. We need to make sure to do it in a safe way where if we bring students to any of our campus environments or residential environments, we need to make sure we have everything in place so we have a high probability everyone can stay there for the entire length of the term and we would not have a midterm interruption as we had in the spring of 20. In the next couple of months I think we will be looking at where the testing program is for test COVID 19, what is the vaccine going to look like and we will take all of that into account. We will not be making a decision in mid December, we will make it earlier than that, but I will tell you that we want to make sure we push that envelope as much as possible because we want to return to that in person part of our academic environment if we can do it in a way that is safe for our faculty, our staff and for our students. That is our paramount concern and will continue to drive our decisions.

>> PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Kirk, that was kind of an unfair question to ask you to look in your crystal ball and let us know what would happen in the spring. Obviously, that is on all of our minds. I appreciate the fact we will be transparent and key people up to date when we know something, we will share it with them. I also appreciate that we do want to get people back in the classrooms so they can have the experience that they were expecting to have this academic year. Elizabeth, I will turn out to you if I could come in last week we announced that undergraduate students will be using distance learning. Can you remind us what our plans are for our graduate students?

>> PROVOST ELIZABETH CHILTON: I worked closely with our Dean of the graduate school and with our academic deans and coordinated with the other campuses. We made a decision to do the same as we have done for undergraduate education. Where it is possible and practical to move instruction remotely, we have done so. This is for a few reasons. Some of our introductory graduate classes have as many as 25 students and we don't have them scheduled in a classroom where we can have them appropriately social distance. Also, some of our classes with the upper level undergraduate classes are even sometimes smaller than our entry-level graduate classes. We basted partly on what curriculum we had the same exception process in place and we are still working through that as it will be finalized by tomorrow, but the same guiding principles were and play, which is does the class require specialized facilities, specialized equipment? This is a class that is needed for students to keep moving on their degree progress as most classes are, but can we do this safely and in a safe manner remotely. Is this something they can take next semester? We have work with faculty and we have only denied a couple of requests for exceptions and we have worked with faculty in those cases to make sure that we mitigate the impacts on students. As I said, nothing replaces being face to face with students. I personally really enjoy teaching graduate classes, especially small seminars, and I do have graduate advisees that I am advising through Zoom and reading their dissertations. I wish I could be there in person with them, but our faculty are really dedicated to making the best of the situation and stain as in close contact as they can.

>> PHIL WEILER: I appreciate that. Stacy, I will turn to you. Last week we announced we will not be reducing tuition rates due to the move to distance learning. As I look at the chat, I saw a question I had on my list and that had to do with what is the status of student fees? I know that we have received questions in the chat as well has questions in advance, can you tell us what efforts are underway to examine student fees?

>> STACY PEARSON: In addition to tuition the students pay to cover instruction and academic activities, students pay both mandatory and voluntary fees for such things as a student activities, recreation centers, athletic sports passes, parking, transit and health services. These fees are the same for resident and nonresident students and also vary by campus across the WSU system. All of these fees are currently under evaluation to determine if adjustments can be made. I think it is important to understand that mandatory fees are actually set by student referendum. In many cases, if not most, they cover the debt service for new facility such as the Pullman campus and student recreation center. In addition, transit services with the city of Pullman goes into that. When they are supported by referendum, they are mandatory so that

the bonds can be paid. What we are looking at is if there are reductions in operations and some of the centers, what can happen with that portion of the fee? Those are being looked at very closely. In addition, the largest mandatory fee is the service and activities fees and those are actually set by the students themselves. The students set these fees as well as allocate the fees in an annual process. They support non-academic student activities, programs and projects and things like student governments, entertainment, student organizations, speakers. These fees for the coming fiscal year, then at them at any of the campuses were increase. The SNAP or those particular fees. The only fees that were increased for the coming fiscal year is that healthy as that is an activity that is ongoing to support the health center. And Tri-Cities transportation fees. We have been mindful of the impacts and students wisely decided for the S and a fees not to raise those. We are taking a very close look at those fees.

>> PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Stacy. You made a good point that students do vote to construct buildings on campus whether it is the student union or a student recreation center. They find future students to pay off the debt that is taken on for those. As you mentioned, the services and activity fees are those fees set by the students themselves. Students do have control over those, many of the fees. I will move on to Theresa, this was probably one of the largest -- one of the questions that receive the largest number of comments in advance of our session today. That is a question that faculty and staff had regarding tuition waivers for staff. Can you talk about what is the status of tuition waivers for staff? Well the program be available even though we are moving to distance learning? I know this is not something that human resource services controls, but you certainly have a role to play in it. Could you to share with the update is on tuition waivers for staff?

>> THERESA ELLIOT-CHESLEK: I certainly will. The office of the registrar provides tuition waiver programs and HRS verifies employees availability. The register recently posted on their website information regarding the employee tuition waiver for fall 2020, specifically classes that are 100 percent web based and blended Global Campus are not eligible for the employee tuition waiver. Employees who have questions on that should feel free to contact the registrar office.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great, thank you. Kirk, I will come back to you for a second. We announced last week that we were going to move from a hybrid model of instruction to distance learning. I know you have been in contact with your fellow presidents across the country so how does our decision to make that move to distance learning compare with what you are hearing at other universities across the country?

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: Phil, thank you and great question. I think what we see is that in the last week, more institutions are electing to move from a more intensive and person experience to using online tools much more so. Western Washington University announced earlier this week that they would be largely online. Central Washington University is also made an announcement. East Washington made an announcement that they would use this format several months ago and we are there as well. To be honest, it depends a little bit on the political environments and some states. In the State of Washington, we have a governor and other elected officials that really emphasizes safety and making sure we are really taking care of

faculty, staff and students and doing it in a very reasonable and safe way. Other states have different perspectives on that. I am not trying to argue whether it is appropriate or not, but there are some differences in states based on the political environment. On the East Coast, Clemson University announced the day before we did that they were starting online and would delay the implementation of in person. Several people have asked, why did we not do that? We could have gone for weeks online and then tried to move in and things like that? It was so disruptive, I felt, to our students and to our faculty and staff in the spring to kind of switch midway. I think we really felt it was important that whatever we decide to start with, we have every intention of finishing a term that way. I think around the country, more places are doing it. I will say at that at some institutions, one in particular I know of on the East Coast that the faculty are using legal grounds in an attempt to move to more -- less in person instruction content. I think you see faculty and staff at many places that are concerned about the work environment and will they be safe? I think we have worked really hard to get to that safe, and person environment. We made the decision when we did after using every tool we felt we had in our toolbox to make it safe. We will see other places around the country. A lot of our other schools, even in the state of Washington are on quarters. They started a month later. We already have some of the schools that are looking at what we did and others did and saying that is the direction they need to go as well. Every President I talked to expresses disappointment like Travis Chilton did. I am used to spending evenings on campus with students, faculty and staff celebrating success, learning about what our students are thinking about. Spending time with graduate students and postdocs and people who come to WSU to pursue that part of their academic career. We miss it just as much as everyone else does, but at the end of the day, we really have to make sure that the safety is a paramount thing. If we have any reservations about putting any faculty or staff member in a challenging, and healthy environment, we have to make the tough call.

>> PHIL WEILER: I agree, thank you. Elizabeth, the President talked about the tools we had that we were using to try to make sure that if we were to do a face-to-face, we would be doing that in a safe manner as possible. I know tools are important for the move to remote instruction as well. Can you talk a little bit about the services and the tools that are being provided to faculty to help them prepare for remote instruction?

>> PROVOST ELIZABETH CHILTON: Absolutely. There are two categories of support services that we have been having a place already and we have been beefing up this week in anticipation of the start of the semester. One is for a set of services and training for faculty and one for students. In terms of faculty, our academic outreach and innovation has been working overtime. If you go to the website, they have trainings and tools and everything as I am looking at it. Everything from courses on preparing for delivery, introduction to Zoom or pan Opto and different pedagogical strategies. Of course, the office will work with you as faculty members one on one. We are also offering the President Provost office, we are collaborating on a program to work with faculty that if there is something specific they need, and upgrade on camera or mic or materials for teaching, they can apply for small seeded resources to be able to do that. We are doing everything we can to work with faculty and make sure that they are as supportive as they can be in this switch, but as President Schulz said earlier, this is a different

thing in the spring where we switched midsemester. No one had planned for that and no one plans for a global pandemic until it is upon you. Now, even though this is a quick switch, as I said, most of our classes were already going to either be fully online or hybrid. We have already come as a university system in thinking through best practices and reaching out to our peers and finding out different methods for delivering a high quality instruction. I wanted to make a plug for the resources available for students. Academic Outreach and Innovation is offering be tech ready workshops and they also offer a variety of trainings on remote learning environment. As the President said earlier, we have set up a hotline specifically for academic questions for students about their classes. We will put that on the COVID website for the university, but there will be a phone number and e-mail. Many times students have a question or concern about either what is going on in the classroom or their connection to technology. They are not really sure who to ask. They don't know whether to ask the Dean of students, faculty, Department chair so we set up a hotline so that students can have a one-stop concierge approach to getting their questions answered. That office will be ready to make sure they get the answers to their questions.

>> PHIL WEILER: I like that idea of the concierge service and a one-stop shop for questions people have. That will be really helpful. I would also echo, Elizabeth, what you said about be tech ready workshops for students. I strongly encourage students and parents to check that out. I had a chance to get a sneak peek at some of the tips and tricks and dance and recommendations. It will be really helpful. I have heard through the questions that were posted online and advance from parents who had students who will be freshmen this year. They were concerned about what kind of experience their students had at the end of their senior year where high school teachers had to quickly shift to online and that was not the best experience in some cases. I want to let you know that I think as we mentioned before WSU has an experience of providing distance learning and with these workshops, students will be well-prepared to get the most out of the idea of distance-learning. One quick thing I will say as we mentioned this in previous sessions as well, prior to COVID 19, virtually all of our students graduated with one online course on their transcript. It is an effective way to learn, it was a very convenient way for students who needed to pick up a class or looking for additional credits or they wanted to make good use of winter break or summer break. This idea of distance learning is not new to us, it is not a foreign concept. Hopefully, we will have a great experience similar to the good experience we had last semester. Stacy, I will move on to you if I could. This was another question in a series of comments we have seen and the last week when we did announce the intention to keep tuition at the rate it is at. We heard from some parents who wondered why does Washington State University charge a different rate for in-state tuition versus out-of-state tuition?

>> STACY PEARSON: Sure. That is a common question that comes up at state universities. The reason is that Washington residents pay taxes that help support public higher education in the State of Washington. That is the revenue that funds the state appropriations portion of Washington State University budget. Since nonresident students and family do not pay the Washington taxes, that is where the additional nonresident tuition comes in to cover the actual cost of the education. Should be noted that the majority of our nonresident students do receive

some type of tuition waiver for discounts to cover that non- resident portion. Those programs are ones that we will continue to look at to determine if anything can be adjusted there. They are actually funded from tuition revenue. All of that is tied together and we have to look at those.

>> PHIL WEILER: Since we started talking about tuition, can you share a little bit about financial aid?

>> STACY PEARSON: Yes, one of the things that we are doing, the financial aid office always does this, but we are identifying working with them and identify different scholarship programs and other aid programs to help alleviate the impact on students. You will remember that we received over \$10 million in care's fund as emergency aid for students and that was the only purpose it could be used for. There is activity at the federal level to provide additional aid packages, hopefully for higher education. Also, the state of Washington provided some funding to help us deal with some of the cost and impacts. We should mention the Washington College grant program is in effect and that should really help some of our students who have an additional need. Again, we also are going back and looking at current programs to see what it is that we can do to help students this coming year. I should also say that financial aid, because they are hearing from students, they are forwarding to us those concerns we hear about. Internet access, concerns about will I be able to keep up in my classes if we go this way? All of this information is getting communicated and some of the programs that Dr. Chilton addressed his getting that feedback from students and parents.

>> PHIL WEILER: I will jump to Elizabeth as you mention Internet access for students. Last year we had students who were concerned they did not have laptops that would be able to keep up with distance learning environments and other folks had spotty Wi-Fi service. I know the Provost office last year made Chromebooks available to students and also made portable hotspots or Wi-Fi hotspots available to students. My understanding, Elizabeth, those programs have not been completely finalized yet for an extension, but can you give us an update of where those are and what the thinking is with regard to the learners of computers and Wi-Fi hotspots?

>> PROVOST ELIZABETH CHILTON: Absolutely. In the spring when we made the quick pivot, the university purchased 300 Chromebooks and 640 hotspots. There are still Chromebooks available if you go to the Provost area, there is a way for students to submit a request and we are working closely with IT on this. We are also working on extending our contracts with the hotspots. We still own the hotspots, but we only signed up originally through the end of the summer. Now, we are extending the contract so the hotspots will continue to be available as well. Students can continue to request that these and if we need to add more to that, we will work hard to do so. Right now, the program is still running and they are still available.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you for that update. Theresa, if I could come of this question came from an employee and I was wondering if Washington State University will be offering a voluntary early retirement incentive program.

>> THERESA ELLIOT-CHESLEK: With this time we will not be offering an early retirement incentive, but if any employee is interested in looking at early retirement options, they should contact our benefits office on retirement. We are not offering an incentive program at this time, but all of the retirement programs that we offer to employees do have early retirement options. That information is on the website or you can contact benefits and services.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Theresa. We are running short on time, but before we go, I have one more question for Elizabeth, if I could. I know that when we made the switch from a hybrid model where we would have people on campus to distance learning, there was concern about what is going to happen with faculty office hours, academic advising, career counseling, tutoring and the like. Will though still continue in this remote environment?

>> PROVOST ELIZABETH CHILTON: Absolutely. In some ways, the interactions with the faculty are going to become even more important because they will not have the casual hallway conversations. We need to make sure that it is clear to students how they can reach out to faculty to speak with them through office hours. We also will have academic advising, tutoring and career counseling that will all work remotely. Those will be announced on their respective websites of how students can avail themselves of the resources. I also want to mention as we had the systems with technology that was available for students, but we will also work with faculty who may need assistance for technology as well. I did recently send out an e-mail to all faculty about any additional needs that they may have so they can contact us through the Provost office.

>> PHIL WEILER: Great. That is an important point. We are at the top of the hour. President Schulz, let me turn it over to you if you have any closing comments before we end the session.

>> PRESIDENT KIRK SCHULZ: Once again, thank you for everyone who is with us today. Thank you for the questions and we will keep doing these forums as long as we need to to make sure we can answer the questions that you have. Look for us to schedule additional ones of these and the next one I have a different focus, but we will make sure to do several that are focused around our employees across the WSU system. I want to reiterate that we talk about technology issues with our students, as Elizabeth just mentioned. We want to make sure that many of you like faculty and staff live in rural areas with challenges of broadband or technology and it is important that students have what they need and we need to make sure faculty and staff have the tools they need to work remotely and to do so in a seamless fashion. We are committed to making sure to do that through Elizabeth's office. Finally, the retirement incentive thing comes up virtually all of these. Theresa is telling you what the current policy is, but clearly there is interest in working with the state of Washington on developing some alternatives. I don't want people out there thinking we are blowing this off, but they are asking why are we not doing something, but this is an internal type of thing we can decide at WSU. Clearly, there is interest in this and we will work with Theresa and her staff, Colleen and others on what types of things may get put into place by the state. That is no guarantee, but this is something people are interested in and we want to make sure that we follow up on the. I don't want anyone thinking that you make two phone calls and two weeks later we have a program in

place. This may be the kind of thing we have ready for next fiscal year or something like that, but we will keep looking at a. We are all in this together and I appreciate the exceptional faculty and staff that we have at WSU. We want to do everything we can in this uncertain time to provide good information, answer questions and make sure that you will feel appreciated for all that you do for WSU. Thanks and Go Cougs.

>> PHIL WEILER: I want to thank the panelists as I appreciate you all making yourselves available for this. Also, our unsung heroes in the background, subject matter experts who have been paying close attention to the chat. I have seen there is a lot of interaction between the subject matter experts and those asking questions. Thank you to them for doing that. As a quick reminder to everyone, if you are a parent or a student, do not forget about the fact that we have our tech ready workshops. Also, make sure you are watching your website for your particular campus and checking your e-mail because in addition to the systemwide town hall meetings, there will also be specific meetings for students, specific town halls for individual campuses. There will be a lot of information coming your way over the next several weeks as we all gear up for the start of the academic year. Pay attention to those opportunities and please take advantage of them. With that, thank you, have a wonderful weekend and Go Cougs.