

August 13, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a few weeks since I have written. I have held off because I felt I didn't have anything to say that would contribute something to the large volume of communication that we've all been getting. We've all been trying to identify the key information from the enormous numbers of words in our emails and in the news. Finding concordant information from all the messaging is impossible.

I have virtually given up on media stories as they are either very old news (with this virus, week-old news is very old), simply another "maybe" interpretation, missing key specifics, or they just don't have the science even close to right. There have been for me, however, a few key standout journalists and I have shared their articles with my direct reports, academic business officers, shared governance and faculty committee leaders and occasionally the CEDS. These people may have passed the stories on to you. I watch President Robbins' Thursday reopening briefings with Dr. Carmona. I think they have done a good job explaining our local pandemic situation, the pressures on our local hospitals and putting these in context with Tucson UA main campus' opening.

I have been following Arizona's SARS COV-2/COVID data. When I last wrote I thought that Arizona's "cases" (i.e. reported SARS COV-2 infections) had left exponential growth, moved through linear growth and had plateaued. It was a very uneven plateau and we have only recently seen the clear decreases in "cases" we needed to see. During these past weeks, lagging indicators, such as emergency room visits, patient ventilations and deaths, have also decreased. I hope our healthcare heroes are getting a hard-earned respite.

Despite doing so the hard way, I fervently also hope that Arizonans have learned that pandemic control without vaccines is fragile and exponential growth in disease is very hard and costly to get back under control.

Following graduation and during early summer, I used the analogy of entering the calm in the eye of the storm. We've left that overt calm now and are being buffeted by uncertainty before the full brunt of the storm hits us again on August 24. You have many compounding stressors. I know some of you are experiencing a toxic combination of enormous work volume, lack of childcare, a horrible K-12 online school start, anxiety about keeping your job, and you want your kids back in school for everyone's immediate sanity (especially yours) and expressly their development—but you are also worried about their health. And you are asking yourself: "When they return home from school, can our family really socially distance?" Moreover, UA's furlough and furlough-based salary reduction program started, adding financial pressure. Some of you are being subjected to outside political pressures from stakeholders and program participants who are unwilling to wear face coverings. Many of you are worried about the infection risk of coming back onto campus. Many of us worry about loved ones we can no longer travel to be with. For some, loved ones have died alone.

I wish I could say otherwise, but as I've said before, uncertainty and stress will be with us for months yet. We need to do all we can to mitigate our risks and protect our wellbeing. It is critical that you focus on your physical and mental health and wellbeing, and that of your families.

Some of our UA colleagues simply cannot work remotely—we should do all we can to keep their risk low. This means there should be a good reason to not work from home. If you are working from home, *do the best you can*. At the best of times some workdays are simply a washout. Accept that there may be more washout days than you'd like.

Supervisors, by definition, furloughed employees will achieve less than when working full-time. No furloughed employee should feel coerced in any way. If you feel coerced, reach out to your supervisor's supervisor. If you need to do so, phone me.

We've recognized signs of a new pandemic in ourselves and others—depression. Look out for each other and reach out early.

I don't know anyone who is having a good time right now. People have done, and will do, more things you don't like. As we all try to find the least worst of bad options, you may vehemently disagree with other's actions. People will have to enact things they don't like themselves. Choosing the least worst option is not the same as endorsing it, or thinking it is a good option. As you take issue with an action (and please do), I ask you please not to resort to *ad hominem* attacks and especially defamation.

With all the ambiguity we have, I want to reiterate unequivocal things I said yesterday during "Dial the Dean":

My highest priority is you.

Our enterprise **has the money to keep everyone employed.**

Yes, to keep everyone employed we will need to put off doing some things that we would rather not have to put off.

To repeat some specifics:

THERE ARE NO CUTS in the CALS, CES, VDL, YCEDA and AES core operating budgets.

There are increased costs assigned to the CALS and CES.

Overall, the UA shows that the CES budget is increased 3%, >\$455K but there are more details that Jeff Silvertooth will share with you about the CES budget.

Because UA has a student-tuition-revenue *predicted* financial crisis, and by far the majority of the CALS revenue is from student tuition, it is unsurprising the **CALS budget is the most impacted**. However, though CALS revenues received through the RCM spreadsheet are down (-9%, \$5.9M directly plus an additional \$3M decrease in UA subvention), CALS revenues received outside of the RCM spreadsheet are up and so CALS has a positive all-funds balance.

Yesterday I showed you the latest CALS budget (#4). We will act on it now because we must and the next CALS budget #5 will be completed for me to provide you a financial update on October 13. I am optimistic CALS finances will be better then.

It is important to note that our new revenue sources are completely expected. You, your unit heads and our mission-area leaders have been building these revenue sources strategically over the last half-decade.

We are in this position because the last few months have tested our strategic intents and they have proven robust. Our strategies are sound. And yes, of course, achieving some of our strategic goals will be delayed...*a bit*.

We have designed and implemented a virtuous cycle where keeping everyone employed delivers more so that not only will we continue to save jobs, but we will grow more jobs.

Not only have our financial and business models withstood their greatest economic shock for 100 years, but because of our capacity—capacity you have built—CALS will keep many people in their jobs in other UA colleges. I am proud and happy that we can and have done this for our colleagues. We will all win because of this.

I have told you before that I will never stop looking for the next thing that can improve our situation, and after that the next.

There are three things we can all do today that will improve our situation tomorrow.

1. Let's not have Arizona learn the hard way again—ensure everyone you know understands that we mask up because: **My mask protects you; your mask protects me.**
2. Focus on you first. Give yourself permission to get less done, and then do the same for the others who rely on your leadership.
3. Assume *everyone you come in contact with* is SARS COV-2 infectious. This means simply following the same standard biosecurity practices you should every flu season. SARS COV-2 is not magic; it follows the same well-known biological rules we've known for decades.

I know the next weeks will challenge us. At times we will not be the best versions of ourselves. But because I know past performance is the best indicator of future performance, I am betting on us. I hope you're betting on you, and your friends and colleagues, too.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Shane C. Burgess
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