

My dear students,

I know you are anxious about our national state of healthcare and economic chaos, and I fully understand. My heart is with you. I am so very proud of your focus on your goals, on your strengths, and on us all getting through this difficult time. You will be hearing more today and tomorrow and ongoing about clarifications of policies and expectations and resources available to you, so please continue to check the website and your emails for new information.

You are part of an incredible moment in history—national and global. I wish I could tell you we have it all figured out. I can't because we don't, and I will always be honest with you. That is part of our Meredith commitment to strengths and honoring our natural talents. We admit what we do not know and we tell the truth about what we do know—even if what we know is uncomfortable and that truth is changing moment by moment. But as a hallmark of strength, honor, and—yes—love, we accept and communicate it all.

As you are concerned for each other, I know you are also concerned about the Meredith employees you love. Your faculty are working diligently to bring courses and experiences online so you can complete your semester, starting on Monday. Housekeepers have redoubled their efforts to clean and sanitize public areas and buildings. Grounds crews are fighting pollen and spring weeds, and they are keeping our campus beautiful. Dining and maintenance folks are still at work to support those who are on campus (although there aren't many here, as requested by the CDC and other advisors).

We are still making a multitude of decisions about instruction, services, policies—all changing because of new information and mandates/guidance from The CDC, The White House, and the NC Governor's office about how we should proceed. Believe me, we are trying to absorb the news as quickly as you are. Before we put out something, however, we want to be sure we have understood the mandates versus the advisories and guidance because some misinformation or conflicting information is in play. So if we delay getting immediate information to you, know that we are erring on the side of accuracy. That said, we will likely still get some things wrong, but we will correct as soon as possible.

I know you are sad about event cancellations. We are trying to be creative about those plans. **Do know that seniors and graduating graduate students will still have some form of Commencement celebration**, although it may not be in May or at Reynolds. We will figure that out, just as we did for our lacrosse teams whose play in the NCAA tournament meant they had to have abbreviated ceremonies, which they loved.

Finally, let me remind you that we have been through flu epidemics before. In fact, it was such an epidemic in 1924 that caused a quarantine of Meredith students. And that was the impetus for the first faculty/staff production of *Alice in Wonderland*. You have

just enjoyed the 96th production of Alice. You know, above all others, that Wonderland returns.

Please continue your studies. These days have been a great reminder that we need well-educated scientists, doctors, social workers, psychologists, business leaders and entrepreneurs, writers and artists of all kinds to make us a stronger country. Be safe. Follow guidelines for hand-washing and physical distancing, and know that I love you all.

We will be together again soon.

Jo Allen, President
Meredith College