



Office of the President

**Testimony to the
House Committee on Appropriations
Jerry B. Farley, President
March 11, 2021**

Chairperson Waymaster, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to speak today on this important topic and we are excited to share all that we have done this past year to address challenges presented by the Coronavirus.

One year ago this week, the impact of the novel Coronavirus became apparent while classes were on spring break. We are a teaching institution, so we all worked diligently to find the best way for our students to learn.

Our goal for last spring, and for the entire past year, was to find a way for students to continue their educational goals, whether to graduate or continue their course work. Changes to academic policies were made to give students greater flexibility during this time when they experienced great stress.

I am proud to say that has occurred. Faculty, staff and students have embraced our Latin motto – Non Nobis Solum- not for ourselves alone.

The only semester that was “shortened” in any way was in spring 2020 when we suspended in-person classes for one week to allow faculty to prepare to deliver courses remotely. There have been no other changes in expected number or amount of class time – only in delivery method of physical versus virtual classrooms.

Importantly, the content offered and received by students fulfilled the credit hour requirements set by the Federal government and applicable accrediting bodies. We were dedicated to ensuring our students were well prepared for graduation and work in their professional field.

Each classroom at the University is now outfitted with technology to enable streaming via Zoom at the same time. Much like your committee hearings, some classes are in-person and students who were quarantined are able to join remotely. Classes were also recorded for students to access later.

It was an incredible challenge for faculty to convert courses to be taught in other formats. The workload is near double - they had to learn new technology and learn how to teach differently.

While most students are anxious to return to normal campus life, there are some students who flourished with the new modalities because of work, family, or they simply did better in a non-classroom model.

We are planning for this fall to be similar to a traditional campus experience, with enhancements to certain classes and programs that we learned over the past year. There have been opportunities to learn new technology and ways of teaching that will serve us well into the future.