



March 29, 2020

To Students, Faculty, Staff, and Each Member of Our SUNY Poly Community,

The current global situation has impacted all of us. While the response to the novel coronavirus has undoubtedly challenged our institution, as it has others, we continue to make the best decisions we can, even when the choices before us are far from ideal.

We have focused on providing information to you as fast as possible to keep our SUNY Poly family on the same page, moving together as one, despite the temporary distance.

Behind the scenes, our incredible faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to create our distance learning environment and maintain academic continuity. While we anticipated challenges as we embarked on this rapid transition, I am proud to see our professors, students, and staff improvising, adapting, and overcoming, together.

Concurrently, we continue to maximize our focus on our community's health, strongly encouraging residential students to remain home after Spring Break to curtail the spread of the virus, while allowing those with special circumstances to remain on campus. For the health of our students—and their families—we have also made the difficult, but necessary, decision to hold our commencement ceremonies at a later date. We are following health and state guidelines enabling employees to work remotely, while encouraging social distancing and other important efforts for those essential employees on campus. My deep appreciation to each of them, who are the backbone of our operations.

We have marshalled all of SUNY Poly's resources to keep serving you. First and foremost, I urge you to find the latest updates on our dedicated webpage: <https://sunypoly.edu/covid19.html>. These updates include simple reminders for preventative measures, travel information, and other resources, such as savings on education-related items for students and their families during this difficult time.

But I need to highlight our most important resource: each member of our SUNY Poly family. Your kindness. Your spirit. Your optimism. In these times I am drawn to the stories of children around the country who are sending drawings to strangers in nursing homes to let them know they are not forgotten. Everyone has a role to play. Our faculty, staff, and students are supporting a SUNY-wide effort by gathering protective equipment and 3D-printing face shield components for front-line medical workers. One class is now using mathematical modeling to learn what societal responses might best address the pandemic. And staff members continue to ensure Poly Pantry meets the needs of those on our campus. The late Fred Rogers urged us in uncertain times to look for the helpers. This is the story of SUNY Poly. **We are those helpers.**



Governor Cuomo recently asked New Yorkers to “Be a little bit more sensitive, understand the stress, understand the fear, be a little bit more loving, a little bit more compassionate, a little bit more comforting, a little bit more cooperative...we are going to get through it together.”

When we look back, my hope is that through our tough, but relatively small sacrifices, we will smile knowing we helped slow the spread of this virus. **We saved lives.**

Soon, we will feel the warmth of knowing we did our best. We worked long hours to adjust plans and fulfill our critical academic obligations. We stood in awe of our students as they adapted to an unprecedented environment. And we will know that they, and especially the SUNY Poly class of 2020, are well prepared to thrive in a world of constant change. **We personified perseverance.**

At his second inauguration in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln told a beleaguered, war-torn nation, “...let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

I share this speech, my favorite, as a challenge for each of us to dig ever deeper and be touched by the “Better Angels” of our nature that President Lincoln spoke about so eloquently. Find ways to take care of others. Current events will dissipate, and over time, today’s actions will crystalize into inspiring memories, providing the kind of deep understanding that only comes when we look back and realize **we are stronger than we ever thought.**

SUNY Poly is here for you, now and in the future. The world may feel fragile at times, but together, **we are resilient.** Our community is proud of you as we forge ahead in the little, everyday ways that make all the difference. Please keep taking care of yourselves and those around you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Grace Wang
Interim President
SUNY Polytechnic Institute