



In my first month as President of St. John's University, I have spent a considerable amount of time talking with many members of the University community. Among several important observations I have made through these conversations, I have come to admire the strength that our students, faculty, administrators, and staff demonstrate under difficult circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. I am heartened by the overwhelming sense of belonging and optimism exhibited by the St. John's community as we navigate the next—and hopefully final—stages of an unprecedented global pandemic.

With the spring semester underway, St. John's actively looks ahead to the Fall 2021 semester and our next academic year. We recognize that many members of the University community are doing the same. St. John's leaders continue to actively seek guidance from local, state, and federal officials to ensure that we rely upon and are informed by the best public health and scientific resources in guiding our decisions—all while maintaining the safety of our community and remaining faithful to our mission to provide an intellectual and moral education to students from every walk of life.

With recent studies showing that broad rollouts of approved COVID-19 vaccines are proving highly effective, coupled with projections that the vaccines will be available to anyone seeking one by the end of the summer—and the comprehensive testing and safety protocols in place at the University—we are optimistic that St. John's will be able to resume a "normal" or "near-normal" experience for Fall 2021.

While recognizing that the situation may change and require us to be flexible, we plan to increase the number of in-person classes and increase capacity in our classrooms, allowing more students the opportunity for face-to-face instruction and interaction. It is also our current plan to follow the University's traditional academic calendar, with normal holidays, breaks, and semester start and end dates, although we will continue to monitor any circumstances which may necessitate an adjustment to our plans.

Lastly, we recognize that a significant part of the student experience at St. John's revolves around the opportunity to get involved on campus. It is our intent to resume some in-person student events, programs, activities, and organizations in compliance with local, state, and federal guidelines.

As a University community, we continue to navigate these unprecedented times together, remaining steadfast in our commitment to forge a path of opportunity for St. John's students who seek to make a positive impact on the world.

We are, and remain, St. John's Strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian J. Shanley, O.P." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' and 'S'.

Rev. Brian J. Shanley, O.P.
President