

From: [Summers, Greg](#)
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Colleagues,

It was a year ago tomorrow when I wrote the first of what would become [regular email updates](#) on Academic Affairs during the pandemic. It's been a long, long year. Although perhaps we're less frightened now than we were last March, having learned to live with the anxiety and uncertainties of COVID-19, we're all certainly more tired. As we enter a well-deserved spring break, I write today with three brief and very hopeful updates.

- Now that vaccines are becoming more widely available, we can begin to imagine returning to a familiar work environment. Soon after spring break, we'll be sharing some guidelines for gradually rolling back the remote work we've been doing and restoring our in-person staffing and operations. The virus will still be with us, and of course we will follow public health guidance. But it's wonderful to hope that fully returning to campus now seems a realistic and not-too-distant possibility.
- Today was the campus deadline for our deans and directors to submit their budgets for the next fiscal year. As I noted in an earlier message, we are reducing spending by \$2.6M, with more work still to do. I have nothing new to report today, but I want to reiterate that we have good reason to believe we can navigate these issues successfully. Our enrollment for next year looks promising, the state budget will hopefully be strong, and the federal relief dollars we have received will be helpful to our students and to the university. I'll keep you posted as these issues continue to evolve.
- Finally, soon after spring break, I'll be sharing an update on the creation of an academic plan for our division. I've had good discussions with several of the workgroups engaged in planning, and we're all excited to dream about the university's post-pandemic future. Our division has accomplished a lot in recent years: integrating two new branch campuses, restructuring our departments into professionally-focused schools, embracing critical thinking as a key learning outcome in general education, expanding our advising and student support, and revamping our approach to recruitment and marketing the institution (among many other achievements!). We have good reason to be tired, but the work you've all done has created a strong foundation on which to set ambitious goals for the next five years. I look forward to continuing this dialogue.

Thanks, as always, for all you are doing. Please get some rest in the week ahead, and stay safe, everyone.

Greg

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Greg Summers

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | [UW-Stevens Point](#)

202D Old Main | 2100 Main Street | Stevens Point, WI 54481

Phone: (715) 346-4686 | [gsummers@uwsp.edu](mailto:gsummers@uwsp.edu)



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