

A note from Rabbi Seth

March 11, 2020

Dear ones,

By this time, we have all seen Maud's email, notifying us of the closing of campus as of this Friday and of the move to online classes for the remainder of the semester. I know that this news will bring up a lot of conflicting emotions, as we all figure out our plans and start to navigate challenges that each of our situations presents. I share the sense of sadness and uncertainty that we all might have.

All of the chaplains will continue to be available to you, either in person, by phone, or by zoom throughout this week, and into the following weeks in which we will be off campus. If you would like to meet, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email or by text or phone (my cell is 617-460-3317). We will also have information on the Chaplains' website: chaplain.williams.edu.

Shabbat dinner this week is cancelled, but we will still hold services on Friday at 6pm. I want to ask all of us to continue good hygiene practices (washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, being mindful not to touch common surfaces, sneezing into the crook of your arm, etc.), everywhere on campus and when we enter the JRC.

Seniors, I know this can be especially challenging for you in your last semester on campus. I encourage you to reach out to each other and to those in your support system (including me, if you wish). This change and disruption is a lot, and it's important for us to care for each other.

We just came out of the holiday of Purim, which, as I alluded to my message earlier this week, invites us to confront the fact that we live in a world marked by uncertainty and the unknown. And yet, as one of my teachers points out, two of the main practices of Purim - giving food to our friends and giving money to the poor - are all about reaching out to each other and building community. Even though these times demand that we practice social distancing in order to protect the most vulnerable among us, that does not mean that we stop caring for each other. In spite of it and especially in the face of it, now it is more important than ever that we increase our capacity to love and care for each other, to check in on each other, and to ensure that we are all safe and have what we need.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need support or want to talk.

Best wishes,
Rabbi Seth