

Dear Colleagues -

During the week of healing and preparation, a number of “Returning to the Classroom” meetings will be provided to NIU faculty, instructors, graduate teaching assistants and selected staff to address existing concerns and to facilitate the resumption of classes on February 25. Dr. Chris Flynn from Virginia Tech, Dr. Jonathan Perry from the University of Arkansas, Dr. Micky Sharma from the Counseling and Student Development Center and experts from the NIU Employee Assistance Program will conduct a number of workshop sessions on February 19, 20, and 21. The times and places for each department/college will be posted on the Provost’s web page later today. In addition, I am asking deans to communicate this information to their colleges, as well as to coordinate any college or departmental activities this week that will help to prepare for the return of the students to campus next Monday.

To help with the support of students returning to classes, on February 25 and 26, one or more professional counselors will be present in each scheduled class to briefly (<5 min.) apprise students of the counseling services that are available to them and to provide immediate assistance should the need arise. Approximately 300 counselors will be present each day in classrooms, department offices, residence halls, and the Holmes Student Center. Some of our faculty with expertise in clinical and counseling services will be working with our counseling staff to provide orientation to these outside experts. These experts are volunteering their services to support NIU during these stressful times. Thus, I would hope that we will all welcome them to our campus. These counselors will be identified by special armbands, so that students can seek them out after class or around campus. Legal Services has prepared a Volunteer Services Agreement that will be made for this purpose.

The Employee Assistance Program (753-9191) is available to all faculty and staff to discuss their reactions to the events of February 14. Confidential, individual sessions are available on the 7th floor of the Holmes Student Center. Group or department level discussions are also encouraged and these can also be arranged by contacting the Employee Assistance Program. Employees who accessed medical or mental health treatment as a result of the events on February 14 should contact Human Resource Services (753-1119) regarding Worker’s Compensation claims. More details about these and other HR services will be distributed to the campus later today. Information concerning additional recovery resources will be available throughout the remainder of the semester on the NIU and Human Resource Services home pages.

I have been extremely gratified with the overwhelming offers of support that we have received, both from the NIU Community and from organizations and institutions around the country. I wish you all well as we prepare to bring our students back into the NIU learning community.

Sincerely,
Raymond W. Alden III
Executive Vice President and Provost