

# OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



March 17, 2021

To the Washington College Community,

It's been quite a year.

What abruptly began as a two-week pause turned into a most unwelcome period of lockdown that has been unlike anything we've ever experienced. Over the past 12 months all of our lives have been impacted in ways both large and small by this pandemic. We have experienced isolation and loss. Plans have been canceled and opportunities have passed us by.

But in the midst of the chaos and uncertainty, we have also grown stronger and more resilient. We have persevered and shifted our perspectives. We have been reminded of what really matters.

I'm exceptionally proud of how this community came together and found a way to return to campus this semester, despite all of the obstacles. While it's certainly not the typical college experience, the stability that's been established on campus validates what we already knew – that this community is better together.

In light of this, I will reiterate that as we look ahead now to the Fall 2021 semester, we are planning for a full re-opening. That includes a thriving campus community, in-person classes, and opportunities for participation in the full spectrum of campus activities.

To be clear, COVID isn't going away and it is likely that some components of our current safety protocols will remain in place. The well-being of our community will remain a priority, and we will continue to evaluate our COVID practices heading into the fall. For that, we will continue following the science and implementing guidance from the CDC and our local Health Department. We are also not far off from a point where everyone who wants to get the COVID vaccine, can get the vaccine – a very positive development indeed.

It is time, therefore, to look forward with optimism and that means planning for a normal start to the 2021-22 academic year. Innovation is wonderful, but there is no true replacement for human connection. We simply cannot wait to see this campus alive and bustling once again.

As we turn our eyes forward, it is my sincere hope that we strive not for a return to "normal" but that we instead seize the opportunity to re-define it. Adversity is a powerful teacher and there is much to be gained if we take the lessons learned over the past 12 months and make them count.

In closing, I would like to offer heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your contributions to the Washington College community over the past year. It took all of us – students, families, faculty and staff – to push through this challenge and we look greatly forward to our next chapter together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne B Powell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Wayne B. Powell  
Interim President