



## OLIVERIAN

Dear Parents,

Yesterday, on our weekly Zoom leadership meeting, Barclay Mackinnon joined a couple of minutes late. His visual "entry" was a dramatic if unintentional reminder that we live and play and work and function (and dysfunction) together a lot like a real family here.



Barclay apparently underestimated the scope of his computer camera. Sweaty and shirtless after a workout, he showed us more of himself than he intended. It took a second for the rest of us to process what we were seeing. New haircut? Hmm. Anyway, once things registered I made him put on a shirt and we all had some fun at his expense. Nutty Uncle Barclay. Family...sometimes to a fault.

But yesterday's comedy notwithstanding, our familiar, familial status is our very best quality as a school. I once told a colleague that I considered my work, our work, as boarding school educators to be, most essentially, a form of parenting. That colleague said, "you'll see that it's actually quite different when you have your own child."

That was before I was a parent and so I took the rebuttal under consideration. Now that I am a parent, though, I know that what I originally said is correct, but with one caveat. Our work as boarding school educators is, most essentially, a form of parenting when it's done right.

During today's leadership meeting it was clear as always that I work with people who love your children as if they were their own. Sure, it's different. But the fundamentals are all there--a readiness to do whatever is necessary and appropriate to protect and educate and love these young people into the fullest version of themselves. To sweat and suffer and celebrate to that end--not even pausing for a global pandemic!

We are a family here and you are part of it. I hope that came across clearly to you and your child during this first, successful week of distance support and learning. I also hope that everyone attends future Zoom meetings fully clothed.

Following are some specific updates relevant to our journey together through this peculiar time.

**CAMPUS STATUS:** Campus will remain closed to students until at least April 25 per our two-week rolling notice. If we do open or partially open before the end of the term, we will offer both on campus and distance options to our families.

**COMMENCEMENT:** Our spring 2020 graduation events will be held, as planned, on June 7, whether in person or virtually. We are already busy planning both options to ensure a fantastic celebration either way!

**WEEK ONE OF DISTANCE SUPPORT AND LEARNING:**

Great job, faculty, students, and parents! There was a very high level of engagement in all areas of our distance program-- academics, counseling, parent support, and after school virtual activities. Our faculty was greatly appreciative of your diligent partnership in working with your child. Thank you! We use our various touch ins with you (parent support groups, one on one calls, etc.) to continually assess what you, as a collective, most need from us during this challenging time so that we can prioritize and refine our efforts accordingly.

**ROOM AND BOARD:** We are working on a calculus to refund part of room and board this term based specifically on line item costs (e.g. dorm utilities and food costs) not incurred by the school this spring due to COVID-19. I will provide more specifics at a later date.

Whether this is Easter or Passover or both or neither for you, I hope it is a window of peace and presence and gratitude in this complicated time.

Warmly and hopefully,

*Will*

Will Laughlin, Head of School/CEO

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