A Message from the Dean
FERNANDO R. MIRALLES-WILHELM

Dear Mason community,

As we begin the spring semester, I want to acknowledge the incredible dedication of our Mason community and express my gratitude for the work we all did to navigate the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of these challenges, we have continued to provide high-quality education and support to our students, faculty, and staff.

I want to recognize the hard work of our students, who have adapted to remote learning and continue to excel in their studies. To our faculty and staff, who have provided exceptional teaching and support, thank you for your dedication and contributions to the university.

The winter break is a time to rest up and take care of ourselves, restoring our energy for this semester. For honestly, with the ongoing pandemic, we need to make that happen. It is crucial to consider our personal health and well-being.

As the semester begins, we test our resolve to deliver on our mission of providing high-quality science and engineering education to our students. To achieve this, we must take care of ourselves and one another, especially during these challenging times. We know that COVID-19 can be deadly (my sincere condolences to you who have had to face tragic losses of friends and family over the past year); we know an online format of virtual learning can occur for a majority of our classes (and many of you also had to also juggle guiding your children through virtual learning while teleworking, not an easy feat); we know that COVID-19 can be deadly (my sincere condolences to you who have had to face tragic losses of friends and family over the past year); we know that COVID-19 can be deadly (my sincere condolences to you who have had to face tragic losses of friends and family over the past year).

So what can we do to stay well? Here are some suggestions:

1. **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness or meditation. This can help reduce stress and improve your overall mental health.
2. **Physical Activity:** Regular exercise is crucial for maintaining good health. Even light physical activity, such as a daily walk, can make a significant difference.
3. **Healthy Eating:** Focus on a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid excessive sugar and processed foods.
4. **Sleep:** Ensure you get enough quality sleep each night. Aim for 7-9 hours per night to promote mental and physical well-being.
5. **Social Connections:** Stay connected with friends and family. Social support is key to maintaining good mental health.
6. **Professional Support:** If you are struggling with stress or anxiety, consider seeking help from a professional counselor or therapist.

By taking care of ourselves, we can better support our students and each other. We are not alone in this journey, and I am here to support you every step of the way.

Stay well,

Dean Fernando R. Miralles-Wilhelms