Friday, March 27, 2020

Dear Alumni,

In recent weeks, as the COVID-19 pandemic has forced rapid, radical changes in every aspect of our lives, I have been thinking about you — our Norfolk Academy alumni who live around the world, across the nation, and right here in Tidewater. I hope you, your family, and friends are holding up and staying safe during this global crisis. It has given me strength to think of you and your love for this school, your belief in the school’s Philosophy and all we stand for; during such a time of challenge, I find a wellspring of energy in your profound commitment to this place, and we all certainly need energy, as well as courage and a sense of unity, to get us through.

A brief update on the situation here: Norfolk Academy, like schools across the nation, has had to adjust swiftly in the face of mounting coronavirus cases across the state and in the Hampton Roads region. Gov. Ralph Northam — who is, as many of you know, a physician by training — has made a series of announcements designed to reduce the spread of the virus, culminating this week in the closure of all schools for the rest of the academic year. As alumni, you can well imagine the faculty’s response — profound disappointment at the enforced but necessary separation from students, followed by a resolve to adapt to online instruction and learning. Above all, we are striving to maintain the close relationships between teachers and students that are the hallmark of the NA experience. We hope you are staying connected with the school and with each other through our social media.

Yet, even as we forge ahead, we must modify or postpone school traditions that have long shaped the close of the year. That includes, regrettably, our upcoming alumni events and celebrations. Field Day and Class Reunions scheduled for this year will be postponed as we consider alternative events in the fall. You may have heard this news already from your reunion chairs. I cannot begin to express my own disappointment, as I look forward to seeing all of you at these gatherings, where we reminisce and share news. I hope that you will make plans to celebrate the school and your enduring friendships in the upcoming year, and that once these events are rescheduled, we will have an enormous turnout.

Thank you again for the tremendous commitment you continue to show for each other, the faculty, and our students; your support elevates our efforts. I have found myself hoping that you are drawing on the many lessons you learned in your years at this school, and the strength of character that we have always prized above academics. Kindness, resilience, and responsibility to serve others — these traits, among many others, make you a Bulldog and an individual who will be a source of comfort, even inspiration, to others during this time.

I look forward to seeing you as soon as possible. Please stay safe and be Bulldog Strong!

Yours sincerely,

Dennis G. Manning
Headmaster