



**Public Expression
September 18, 2020**

Jalelah Ahmed, Alumni

Stop in person classes. State College can't afford for the students to be in town.

Dear Penn State Board of Trustees, Earlier this summer, under your guidance, Penn State opted to make the costly mistake of succumbing to political pressure amid the world's worst global health crisis since 1917. Those of you entrusted to protect this University and the faculty, staff and students who attend cowered to political pressures, choosing profit over safety in order to increase profit revenues. By doing so, you decided that making money was more important than keeping the lives of students, faculty, staff and those who share the grocery stores, doctors offices, police and fire departments, along with the borough of State College, safe. Your decision has impacted all of Central Pennsylvania—not just the University that occupies it. As an alumna, I'm outraged, not only for the students in State College, but my poor mother who worked at the University for over 35 years and is in remission from her journey with cancer. She is at an increased risk of dying from COVID-19, if she contracts it, given her suppressed immune system. She is just one of many people I know and love after growing up in State College, PA, who are at severe risk of death, if they contract the virus. I am utterly sickened by your decision to hold in person classes, when you have the ability to send the students home. After touting what you believed was a coherent COVID-19 mitigation plan, supposedly designed to hedge the campus and surrounding community from exposure to the virus, in just three weeks, due to your sheer negligence there are now over 400 positive COVID-19 cases at Penn State. State College is my hometown. We have only one hospital and it lacks a trauma center. We have just under 400 hospital beds and a fraction of the ventilators needed to accommodate a full hospital. I hope you recognize that people are going to die from this virus in State College and your continued negligence and regard will be the sole reason why. I have been attempting to reconcile my grief over the Sandusky child sexual abuse cover-up for years. Your reckless decision to bring the students back has renewed my tainted view of the School I paid thousands to attend for both Undergraduate and Graduate Studies. I now truly believe that the University has proven that it could care less about anything but it's profits. I'm ashamed that I even attended this university, let alone that my family has to share this town, given the severe risk your negligence has caused my relatives, family friends and colleagues. You professors deserve better. The staff who are the backbone of Penn State, work extremely hard to maintain this university, deserve better. I am absolutely mortified and incensed at your reckless and irresponsible decision to endanger lives. Penn State has created a disaster that could have been completely avoided if you simply opted to keep the students at home. The University's initial plan was not only ridden with contradictions and expectations that were in many ways laughable, it was doomed for failure. This includes the pre-arrival "self-quarantine," provisions which indicated that "all faculty, staff and students should self-quarantine — even if

you do not feel sick or have no symptoms — for at least 7 days immediately prior to your arrival on campus.” All the while, you knew that you had absolutely no enforcement mechanism to manage this feat. You even acknowledge within the plan that these guidelines may not be possible for every international student depending on their planned date of arrival in the U.S. Instead of self-quarantining, Penn Staters, in traditional Penn Stater fashion held coronavirus themed, back-to-school parties. The fact is, you should have been able to predict that this was going to happen. And while those 18-24 year-olds were undoubtedly reckless, you are all to blame for bringing these children back in the first place. Many believed and hoped that common sense would prevail. Many believed and hoped that common sense would prevail and that the Board of Trustees would come to grips with the fact that the town simply did not have the medical infrastructure to deal with the impending crisis, especially upon learning of a bomb threat as students began to move back into their dorms. Nevertheless, you blindly forged ahead making zero reconsiderations. With students back in State College, occupying grocery stores, doctors offices and downtown common areas, we have reached the critical implementation phase of this plan and it is failing. The decision to bring the students back has undoubtedly put each and every single person in State College and surrounding communities and campuses at much greater risk for contracting this deadly virus. What’s repulsive is the students never had to come back here to begin with and you know that. You had weeks to change your plan, but you pushed ahead. If you look through the coronavirus mitigation plan, nearly every photo showcased has a student behind a computer engaged in remote learning. Penn State, a university with one of the largest information sciences and technology departments in the country, opted against hosting classes online through its Canvas software in order to drive up revenue. You decided that endangering the lives of the people who live in State College was acceptable. You all should resign! Penn State unlike many other campuses across the country is nestled in the middle of two mountains in a town that does not have multiple hospitals or even a single trauma center. State College is ill-equipped to deal with an outbreak on a campus with roughly 45,000 students. Instead of telling us to stop panicking, abort the mission, send the students back. Resign! You have failed.

Mary Jane Helton, Staff

Send the students home.

<https://www.globest.com/2020/04/13/how-one-developer-is-still-closing-deals/>

Chairman Dambly, why the hell was it okay for you to close business deals via Skype but you and the board refused to allow virtual learning for students? You’re fueling a pandemic in State College, PA.