



Dear SCU Community,

We are coming to the end of an amazing, difficult, innovative, challenging, “twice-in-a-lifetime” year, as COVID stayed with us through all of 2021, despite all our desires and efforts otherwise. We recently learned that there were more COVID-19 deaths in the US in 2021 than in 2020 – a troubling statistic that shows just how persistent this challenge has been. Our thoughts go out to our whole community: those who lost loved ones, those who have experienced health impacts, those whose educational experiences have been different than planned, those who have experienced economic difficulty and upset, and all of us who have weathered the pandemic. **It has been a difficult year. We’ve faced it together – and here we stand at the end of one year and the beginning of a new.**

A new year always provides opportunity to reflect, to plan, and to look forward with hope. And at SCU, we certainly look forward with hope to 2022.

There are signs of progress to support and grow that hope. We look forward to holding an in-person commencement at the amazing LA Coliseum on December 17th! In Spring, because of recent changes in events considered allowable by the L.A. County Department of Public Health for colleges and universities, we anticipate the return of in-person White Coat ceremonies to be held outdoors with safety precautions in place. These are some of the many signs of progress!

Even with progress, some things in our fight against COVID-19 will remain the same as we enter the new, Spring 2022 trimester. The LA County Department of Public Health still requires vaccination or weekly testing of students and employees who are involved with patient care. We will continue to wear masks on campus when indoors and follow social distancing and hygiene precautions. Labs that can be simulated are still typically offered online, while skills labs and clinicals continue in-person. Lectures are usually online, as are club activities. These precautions, while challenging, have made a difference; there still has been no documented transmission of COVID-19 from any University activity since the start of the pandemic. We look forward to when those precautions change – and expect to see further normalization of activities and more in-person activities by the summer.

Thank you for your patience as we face these challenging times together. I send each of you the best of wishes for a normal, peaceful, productive 2022.

John