



BOSCO TECH

Dear Bosco Tech Family,

As we conclude our observances of Holy Week, I pray you and your families are safe and well. Even as we celebrate the glory of our risen Lord, we find ourselves faced with the burdens of uncertainty and the pain of loss. It's at moments like this that we must rely on our family, neighbors and faith for strength and courage to sustain us.

There has been much said lately through the media about the status of the school year for our peers in public schools across the state. Naturally, questions about the status of private schools are being asked. From the start of this crisis, the practice of Catholic schools has been to follow the guidance of public health officials in our respective communities. Based on the previous "Safer at Home" order, we anticipated a return to campus on Monday, April 20. After a review of the most recent information released, this order has been extended again, though we have not been given a definitive date to return. Instead, we have been advised by the Los Angeles Archdiocese that a return to in-person instruction will resume when it is "safe to do so." Therefore, distance learning will continue.

We must acknowledge the reality of this unprecedented public health emergency – we do not know if we will return to campus before the end of the school year and preparing for this outcome is now essential. While it remains our hope to return to campus as soon as possible, the health and safety of our students and educators is our top priority.

In line with this policy, all school events scheduled for April or May have been cancelled or postponed, including senior pre-graduation gatherings such as prom, the senior awards ceremony, and Grad Night. The organizers of any such events will notify participants if an alternative future date can be worked out. Accordingly, the CIF commissioner recently cancelled all spring sports and championships for the 2020 season. Unless a significant change in the state and local governmental response to the COVID-19 crisis is announced, it is unlikely these events will be reinstated. As always, check our website and calendar for updates.

For our families of seniors, a variety of options is under consideration for the 2020 Graduation Ceremony and Baccalaureate Mass. To be clear, we have no intention to cancel graduation, but instead are keeping all options open as to how we can best celebrate this milestone event. Every effort will be made to honor our students and their achievements and, of course, we will keep you informed about how this will happen.

As we begin our fourth week of distance learning, I would like to review what has been accomplished thus far. Prior to the start of online classes, instructional leaders researched and prepared professional development and training for our faculty in implementing the transition to off-campus coursework. Through the first week of classes, we initially focused on moving all classes to the Google Classroom environment. Since the school had invested in the Google-Suite for Education almost two years ago, this process went reasonably smoothly. We also began a technology needs assessment of both our families and teachers and immediately began addressing them. To that end, if your son, or a Bosco student you know, still lacks computing resources to effectively do their school work, please let the teacher know and they will pass the request on to administration.

In our second week of distance learning, we shifted our attention to improving the attendance process. By the end of the week, the number of students not checking in regularly to their classes dropped dramatically and we began to receive reports that the submission of online homework was approaching pre-coronavirus levels. The school continued to address technology and training needs of faculty and also for some students. We also began scheduled online help sessions to ensure that teachers were available to students when they needed them; of course, teachers can always be reached via email or Google Classroom.

Recognizing the need to replace the face-to-face element of education, in week three, we asked all teachers to host live-instruction video conference sessions. This was in addition to the live video help sessions they had already been offering. The school has constantly researched, shared, and implemented best-practice methods to improve our students' distance learning experience. This continues in the fourth week of instruction, as the faculty team works collaboratively to create a more consistent schedule for classes, assessments and project-based learning.

We understand and have received a significant amount of feedback on how challenging the transition to distance learning has been for our students and families. We also know our school community is experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and grief. An increasing number of our families have an ailing elderly relative, an immune-compromised child, or a friend or family member in a precarious health situation. Many families are also struggling with a parent who is not working, or one who is working in health care, in a grocery store, or in any of the essential jobs that we all rely on, but which also come with a greater risk of exposure to this virus. Our hearts go out to you. Know that we are inspired by your courage, resilience, kindness, and hope. These are the attributes that will carry us through this crisis.

For me, these qualities have been remarkably embodied by the teachers and staff of Bosco Tech. All of our teachers have had to invest untold hours re-tooling their lesson plans and instructional methods to continue the educational process for our students. I have heard many describe how they miss their students, classrooms, and school campus. Our support staff is operating primarily from remote locations, working to keep in place the essential components of the school infrastructure. And all are striving to maintain the important relationships with our Tech students' families.

Schools are not buildings. They are people. They are the trusting, caring relationships forged among staff, students and families. In the past weeks since our school campus has closed, I have actually watched those relationships deepen. I have watched as faculty – many of whom are new to remote learning – reached out to one another to share technology support, creative ideas, and expressions of humor. I have watched as they connected with students through morning meetings, virtual lessons, emails and phone calls. And I have watched as they continually and creatively found ways to connect with families and with the larger community in St. John Bosco's spirit of "school is life being lived," even when we are living far apart from one another.

Hopefully, you got to view the visual message of hope and perseverance that the faculty and staff of Bosco Tech shared with the community through our picture video: <https://youtu.be/oq8W4fyCSx4>. These people are working tirelessly for the day that we come back together as a family to support the continuing education of our young men.

If you are seeking prayer support during this time, please know that Fr. Chinh Nguyen, our Salesian Director, is available. Hopefully, you enjoyed Fr. Chinh's Lenten messages last week and were able to participate in his online Easter Sunday Mass. As the leader of our faith community, he continues to remind us of the true source of our strength and peace!

Thank you for your patience and solidarity as we work together to help our young people. We will continue to keep you informed of important developments as they emerge. Please join me in praying for our nation, our community, our school, our families, and our Church.

Take care and stay safe.

God bless,

Jeff Krynen - Principal

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