



July 24, 2020

Dear Heidelberg Community,

This morning, the Ohio Athletic Conference Presidents Council voted unanimously to postpone all NCAA intercollegiate athletic competition through December 31, 2020, amid the continued and growing concern of COVID-19. The fall sports that have intercollegiate competition postponed include cross country, football, golf, soccer, tennis, and volleyball. The winter-season sports of basketball, indoor track and field, swimming and diving, and wrestling also will have intercollegiate competition postponed during the 2020 calendar year. The OAC is committed to moving NCAA intercollegiate competition to the spring, with various models currently being discussed. (Read the OAC's announcement [here](#).)

OAC Commissioner Tim Gleason provided these thoughts: "The OAC believes we can continue to provide an excellent experience for our student-athletes, while continuing to make the health and safety of our student-athletes, coaches, staffs, families, fans, and campus communities our highest priority."

Heidelberg coaches communicated the news to their respective teams shortly after the OAC's decision this morning. Now, they turn their attention to helping our student-athletes successfully navigate these new limitations and the associated new opportunities this fall. I want to express my tremendous respect and appreciation for Athletic Director Matt Palm and all of our head coaches and their assistant coaches in supporting all of our student-athletes through this challenging pandemic.

While competition will not occur in Fall 2020, the OAC is working with Heidelberg and all of its member institutions to plan a robust engagement of student-athletes during the fall semester with conditioning and preparation for spring competition according to CDC guidelines and NCAA criteria in conjunction with local health guidelines. This is encouraging and hopeful news for our student-athletes and for all of us.

I want to reiterate that the decision to postpone fall competition and the plan to develop and execute meaningful athletic experiences was grounded in the best interests of our entire campus community and especially our student-athletes. On May 19, Heidelberg announced plans to reopen the campus for the fall semester, and those plans currently remain in place.

Athletics, and indeed all co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, is essential to the overall experience for many students, which is why this decision is deeply disappointing to so many of us. But it is the right decision. I want to assure you that a group of coaches, athletic trainers, staff and many others on our campus have been working extremely hard to study current data, evaluate new NCAA safety and testing guidelines and, in consultation with OAC team physicians and local public health experts, weigh all of our options for safely having our seasons. Tremendous time and resources were invested in our attempt to create safe conditions for a competitive fall season. However, the current surging state of COVID-19 illness and spread across Ohio and the country poses risks that are simply too high for teams and student-athletes to compete and for travel among colleges.

As we continue to pursue ways to provide opportunities to keep all of our students focused on academics and engaged this fall, we all look forward to the return of Heidelberg OAC athletic competition in the spring of 2021.

With Berg Pride,

Rob Huntington
President