

PARENTS OF RETURNING STUDENT EMAIL 4.20.20

Subject: Tuition Assistance for Returning Students

Dear NAME,

Peace and Blessings!

The impact of this pandemic will be felt for years, and I find myself praying frequently for all of you mourning for precious lives lost in your families and around the world.

I am also praying for those whose sense of peace and purpose have been disturbed by these trying times and for those trying to recover from the economic harm caused.

I have an announcement that I pray blesses you.

Last weekend, Franciscan University of Steubenville's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adopt [Step in Faith](#), a COVID-19 response plan that provides **every returning on-campus undergraduate student with \$1,000.**

Step in Faith also provides **any student who wishes to pursue a master's degree at Franciscan with one semester (12 credit hours) of free tuition coverage** toward any one of Franciscan's 11 graduate degree programs (online or on campus, following application and acceptance into the program). Students may use this graduate studies tuition coverage all in one semester or over the next five years as convenient for them.

In addition, through Step in Faith, **the University has earmarked a special financial aid fund to assist those students who have experienced significant financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** I don't want money to stand in the way of any of them being able to return this fall.

I want all of our students to come through this pandemic together—to take this step in faith together—and I am committed to doing everything in my power to bring our Franciscan University community back to campus this fall.

Sending your child back to college can be scary even in a normal year. Although I am not a parent, I understand that this year will require more than the usual courage and confidence in God's protection to let your child leave home. But as a spiritual father to the 2,300 "kids" the Lord has entrusted to me, I assure you that I take very seriously the charge to provide a safe, healthy campus community for your child.

As you'd expect, Franciscan University follows recommended guidance for creating and maintaining a healthy environment and responding to COVID-19. More importantly, as you know, our Franciscan University community is small and exceptionally caring, so we notice and tend to your child's needs more readily than large state schools.

I can't take away all your fears. This is, after all, a step in faith. I hope you'll take it with us and continue your journey with Franciscan University. And I hope the additional financial assistance I've outlined eases some of the burden.

Providing this level of financial assistance is a step in faith for Franciscan. Not because we wouldn't love to give more aid every year, but because our resources must cover so many competing needs. Because of the pandemic, we have deferred other plans and projects this year so we can use far more of our reserves toward this enhanced financial aid.

But we're also inviting families for whom tuition payments are not a hardship—as well as other generous benefactors—to contribute to [the Step in Faith Fund](#) that will help us provide financial aid for those in greater need.

St. Francis of Assisi had a deep concern for those in need, and as a Franciscan University, we strive to follow his example in caring for those entrusted to us. I hope and pray that our [Step in Faith plan](#) will allow every one of our students to return to campus in peace and joy.

Please know of my continued prayers for you—and that I look forward to welcoming your son or daughter back to campus this fall.

Peace,
Father Dave

Father Dave Pivonka, TOR
President
Franciscan University of Steubenville