

RETURNING STUDENT EMAIL 4.20.20

Subject: Help Is on the Way

Dear NAME,

Peace and Blessings!

If you're like me, you're probably ready for some good news about now. You're in luck. 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 of you who wish to pursue your 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). You may use this graduate studies tuition coverage all in one semester or over the next five years as convenient for you.

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 you being able to return this fall.

I want all of us 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.

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, which will help us provide financial aid for those in greater need.

After all you've gone through this semester, returning to Franciscan in the fall may seem scary. This year will require more than the usual courage and confidence in God's protection to leave home.

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

I can't take away all your fears. This is, after all, a step in faith. But I hope you'll take it with us and continue to walk with Franciscan University as you have in the past.

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 you to return to campus in peace and joy. I can't wait to welcome you back in August!

Peace,  
Father Dave

Father Dave Pivonka, TOR  
President  
Franciscan University of Steubenville