



March 19, 2020

Dear Loomis Chaffee Alumni, Parents of Alumni, and Friends,

In these challenging times, first and foremost, I hope that you are healthy, are staying abreast of the news about the COVID-19 virus as it spreads across the country and around the world, and are attentive to and following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and of your state and local health authorities. As the days have passed and, I suspect, as the weeks progress, the Loomis family's motto of *Ne Cede Malis* or "do not yield to adversity" will stick in the forefront of our minds as we each do that which is in our power to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

With students from 32 states and 48 countries, we have had to think carefully through our response to this unprecedented public health crisis. In January, we began monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 and providing students, faculty, and staff with best practices to help prevent the spread of the virus. In February, with the March break in our sights, we established travel guidelines and return-to-campus protocols based on CDC and U.S. State Department recommendations and travel restrictions. We also canceled several school-sponsored March trips, including the Alvord Center for Global & Environmental Studies' student trips to Italy and the Galapagos Islands, and athletics trips for our girls and boys lacrosse teams to California and the boys baseball team to Florida. We also canceled our yearly swing through the West Coast, including receptions in Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as all planned gatherings and activities by outside groups scheduled to use Loomis Chaffee facilities.

This week, heeding the announcement by the CDC that all gatherings of more than 50 people should be avoided and following the lead of some of our peer schools, including those in higher education, we made the very difficult decision to move to online teaching for the spring term. We will face additional important decisions in the days and weeks ahead. Two of those will focus on Commencement activities, May 23-24, and on Reunion Weekend, June 12-14, 2020. Although it is highly unlikely that we will hold either set of events as scheduled, we will keep you posted as we push forward thoughtfully and responsibly. While these measures are disappointing for all students and especially for seniors as they had eagerly anticipated to their final spring and graduation and to alumni who have been eyeing Reunion Weekend, we feel strongly that Loomis Chaffee must exemplify its best self and serve the common good.

To end this particular message with some uplifting news, I want to praise highly the actors of *The Addams Family*, who were outstanding in what is likely to be the final musical in the Norris Ely Orchard Theater (NEO) as most of you remember it; while the theater will continue to carry the NEO name and will look and feel much the same, we will renovate it

carefully as it becomes part of the Nichols Center for Theater and Dance. I also want to praise the very talented musicians and singers who performed in the end-of-the-winter-term concerts and the artists whose works were displayed in the Richmond Art Center's Wilde and Barnes Galleries. Finally, with several varsity teams competing in the New England Championship Tournaments, the boys basketball and boys hockey teams emerged as victors in their classes.

Take care of yourselves. Along with washing your hands frequently and thoroughly, please practice the art of social distancing. It may go far in flattening the curve.

Yours,

Sheila Culbert  
Head of School