



My Maclay families,

My message to you today is one of encouragement during an exciting week on campus. For a little bit of fun, I'm going to share some quotes I enjoy from an author you know throughout this letter. I'll reveal the author at the end. I bet you will guess who penned these before then.

*"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think and twice as beautiful as you've ever imagined."*

Child/adolescent development is a complicated journey. If you force it into broad strokes, I put it into two areas of focus: their skillset and their mindset. My faculty are skilled in developing both and we strive to design our systems to support each. If you have spent any time with me talking about a great Maclay experience, you know our partnership together is essential. A few weeks ago, we invited all parents in for virtual conferences so we could share insights and encouragement for each other on how each student could find greater success. We will also release our third webinar with our Guidance team next week. This year we are taking extra care to equip everyone in our community with tools to take care of themselves and each other. 2020 has brought unique challenges, but it does not mean we can't thrive within uncertainty.

*"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory"*

As we approach the holiday season and ready ourselves to mark the completion of the first trimester of our school year, I cannot thank everyone enough for their hard work, trust, sacrifice, and perseverance. The quote above speaks to the importance of moments in our lives. Certainly, their importance in our individual lives, but also the moments that are a part of an institution, rites of passage, traditions, and events we don't want to give up. This week is a great example - Homecoming Week! After three months of being back together, we are excited to find some normalcy in this tradition. The homecoming parade, dress-up days, break games, court – complete with King & Queen, and coming together to celebrate being a Marauder is a tradition we are so happy to continue. This year demands a balance between not pushing too hard and refusing to neglect what is possible. The fuel that makes all of this possible is the student spirit. The energy and joy are unmistakable in our students and it makes all the difference. Keeping them highly motivated and focused is sometimes an uphill battle, but we are right beside you because we know how important it is.

*"It is fun to have fun, but you have to know how."*

This last quote will probably give it away, but it is one that is instructive to us as we move into the second trimester of our school year together. Many of you have already

anticipated the next two months and the upcoming breaks. Travel, crowds, gatherings, and quarantining carry with them significantly more weight in our family decisions than they ever have before. We need everyone to use great care in their choices. I ask that each of you make decisions that are right for your family and safe for our community. My team has worked hard to build an in-person and virtual system that will allow an uninterrupted education regardless of whether you are able to come to campus or need to quarantine at home. As we enter the season that prioritizes coming together with family and friends, just remember that your choices impact Maclay in a powerful way. As our comfort may have grown in the world with COVID-19, let's not let our guard down with how our actions help Maclay keep its doors open to students on campus.

*"So be sure when you step, step with care and great tact. And remember that life's A Great Balancing Act. And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed) - Dr. Seuss*

Have a great week and don't forget to wash your hands,

James



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