Aug. 6, 2020

Blugold Flight Plan launches as faculty, staff and students prepare to return to campus

Chancellor Jim Schmidt outlined the recent launch of the Blugold Flight Plan, an informational campaign designed to help provide a healthy learning environment for the campus community when classes resume at UW-Eau Claire on Sept. 2. The chancellor noted that more than 1,600 informative messages are being placed across campus to encourage healthy habits and remind Blugolds to wear a mask, washing your hands thoroughly and to practice physical distancing to help prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Chancellor Schmidt said students will be required to sign a “Fly Right” pledge to follow these steps to help protect themselves, other students, faculty and staff.

Here are key points from this week’s briefing:

- Every student, faculty and staff member will receive a special “Landing Gear” package that includes a water bottle, two masks, a thermometer and instructions on how to download and use the Blugold Protocol app to monitor their health.

- More than 450 sanitizing stations will be set up across campuses in Eau Claire and Rice Lake. In addition, sanitizing wipes will be available at every teaching station in about 200 classrooms.

- Two programs to benefit employees have been put in place at UW-Eau Claire. The first is an employee loan program, which allows employees who were unable to receive full unemployment benefits during consecutive furloughs access to no-interest loans. UW-Eau Claire is the first comprehensive university to offer this type of employee loan program. The second program allows employees to enroll in UW-Eau Claire classes at no charge if the class is not full.

- Enrollment projections indicate a slight decrease for the 2020-21 school year, but not the significant losses some universities contemplated for the fall. Compared to last year at this time, UW-Eau Claire’s student headcount is currently up 33 students, and UW-Eau Claire – Barron County is up 23 students. Though these numbers will shift some in the next month, the enrollment picture is encouraging.

For additional information, UW-Eau Claire students and employees can visit the “Chancellor COVID-19 Briefings” page on the Chancellor’s Office Blugold Insider site. Public resources are available at uwec.ly/COVID-19.