



# DAEMEN

COLLEGE

**A World of Opportunity**

Office of the President

April 2, 2020

Daemen College  
Faculty and Staff

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are staying healthy and safe during this ongoing crisis. I thank you for your continued service to the college during this unprecedented and trying time.

Despite the undue stress this pandemic has put on the college, I am proud of the fact that we have been able to maintain our daily operations remotely and continue to pay all of our dedicated faculty and staff. As I am sure you are aware, this has not been the case with many institutions across the country that have had to institute furloughs and/or layoffs. Our key priority is to continue to keep all faculty and staff on the payroll. I believe that Daemen is well positioned to weather this storm, and this is a testament to the hard work you all are putting in from afar.

That being said, the full impact of this pandemic on the college is not yet known, and we must be prudent and prepare to face some financially difficult times ahead. All departments are to cease all unnecessary hiring and expenditures. Exceptions must be approved by the Cabinet official over your department.

One recent decision the Cabinet has made with regard to protecting the financial health of the college and maintaining our ability to avoid furloughs and layoffs is with our health care renewal. The college and our faculty and staff simply cannot continue to absorb drastic increases every year from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, especially during a crisis. We are fortunate, though, to have an exceptional option for the college's coverage in Univera. They have presented a plan with nearly identical coverage to what has been in place, but at a nominal increase to the college. Staying with Blue Cross would have cost the college, and consequently our faculty and staff, over \$150,000 more than switching to Univera but with no appreciable difference in quality—a reckless and fiscally irresponsible choice at a time when many colleges are fighting for their very existence.

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I personally was in contact with a high official at Blue Cross this weekend, as was one of our Trustees, to try to convince him that the college and our employees simply cannot afford such a huge and unnecessary increase. Unfortunately, our pleas fell on deaf ears.

I acknowledge that there have been past concerns about Univera's customer service and that there may be some faculty and staff who still have concerns about it. However, I also believe, based on recent conversations and data, that those customer service issues have long ago been addressed and that that switching to Univera is the best decision for our faculty and staff in terms of keeping costs down and money in people's pockets.

I want to thank the faculty and staff members who served on the Health Insurance Renewal Committee for their hard work in examining proposals from the various providers and discussing the pros and cons of each. They did a great job of sorting through all the complexities of multiple different plans.

Over the next week or so, you will receive details on the transition to Univera. I suspect that we will all be quite impressed with the high-quality service that Univera will provide us all.

Cordially,



Gary A. Olson  
President