



The Omicron variant has been assaulting communities around the world, and it has now arrived – the pandemic is not over. Dashed hopes – people are exhausted trying to deal with COVID. And yet, we will overcome this. This pandemic is fertile ground to expand our own capacity to endure in the face of difficulty, and do so in a way that evidences the deep resiliency present in and that characterizes our Pepperdine community.

Our Lord told us to expect adversity in this world. Ours is to respond with faith, perseverance, and spiritual maturity. This is the kind of trial that tests our faith and can lead to spiritual wholeness. So let us not stall in despondency or depression about the pandemic; let us continue to battle this cunning

adversary, and do so with courage and honor. We have fought and overcome the Spanish Flu, Polio, Smallpox, Ebola, and many others; we will overcome COVID-19.

Jordan B. Peterson often talks about the fact that we find meaning and purpose in responsibility. We are presented a great responsibility: to work together to get Pepperdine, our students, and our families through the pandemic. But, it is more than just to get to that destination; we must do so as followers of Christ. I know the Pepperdine community well, and from that experiential knowledge, I will make you a promise. When those days post-pandemic finally arrive and we look back, we will be proud of the Pepperdine community. We will remember how we walked the uncharted roads humbly without arrogance; how we wrestled together to find a cherished but elusive consensus where each was able to compromise a bit, while putting others' needs first. Most importantly, we will remember how we treated each other with respect and dignity, even when we were tired, even when we were afraid.

This University is unique; God's presence dwells within the Pepperdine community. That is never more evident than in times of need and great responsibility. Thank you, Pepperdine colleagues and friends, for the way you embrace responsibility. It is a great privilege to work as part of this special community. Into the New Year!

Phil E. Phillips
Chief Operating Officer

