



JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY

18 June 2020

To the JRU Community,

Hello again. I hope this letter finds you all safe and healthy, as we continue to go through the COVID-19 pandemic. José Rizal University has been quite busy during this time, and many have asked about our plans for the upcoming school year (SY), 2020-2021. In this letter, we answer your major questions. We hope to provide you with a sense of clarity and comfort that education will continue and that the student at JRU will be safe. JRU has always promised that, “We Care About Good Education.” It is a promise you can trust us to keep.

Specifically, we believe that during this pandemic, trusting us to keep that promise is defined by three concerns:

- (1) the safety and health for students,
- (2) our school fees, and
- (3) how we will deliver our programs to students.

So allow me to discuss our plans for each concern. But first, a few announcements...

General Announcements

Start of SY 2020-2021. The first day of class for SY 2020-2021 will be on Monday, **August 10, 2020**. This is for all levels. This is the same date as pre-COVID-19 and a result of our decision to move our school year to August.

Enrolment. Enrolment will start on July 13 for current JRU students and July 14 for new students who are not transferees, and with early (online) enrollment ongoing now. Early enrolment can be found [here](#) (this document uses hyperlinks, so please click on the blue, underlined text to take you to the online link. If you are viewing a non-hyperlinked version of this document, all the online information can be found on www.jru.edu). The details of online enrolment are discussed at the end of this letter.

Online and face-to-face. All classes, until further notice from the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), will be run through flexible learning, primarily online through our learning management platform, Canvas. Existing students already have Canvas accounts. New students will get their own Canvas accounts. (We also have a low-bandwidth approach for those with weaker internet connections.)

Please note that when face-to-face classes are eventually allowed, the main mode of learning will still be based on online, for safety and health requirements. JRU has over a decade’s experience with online work, and believes it holds several advantages in addition to safety. We are excited to bring you unto our blended world.

Graduation: first week of August. Last March 13, 2020, we wrote that we would aim for a Batch 2020 graduation in the last week of May to the beginning of June, which is when we thought quarantine would be lifted. We will continue with this promise, but will run it as a (virtual) live stream event. We will release a separate note with more details (such as times and the graduation program), but for now please refer to the graduation dates, below:

Division	Date
Elementary School	August 3, 2020, Monday
Junior High School	August 4, 2020, Tuesday
Senior High School	August 5, 6, 7, 2020, Wed-Fri
College	August 8, 2020, Saturday
Graduate School	August 9, 2020, Sunday
Law School	August 9, 2020, Sunday

Please allocate 90 minutes for your graduation.

The campus is open. JRU started having skeletal staff return to campus last June 8. However, we continue to encourage our staff to work from home, as we have the necessary digital platform for working from home. While students and parents can come to the campus to transact business, our major transactions (document requests, payments) can all be done online or through our partners (e.g., banks for payments). We encourage students and parents to use these online services, accessible through www.jru.edu.

The Three Concerns

1. Safety and Health: Students Will Be Protected

Strict adherence to health protocols. We are fully compliant with all safety protocols for health and security for students, faculty and staff, as mandated by the DOH, DTI and DOLE. We also closely follow the protocols of the Philippine Society of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (PSMID), interpreted and guided by the University’s Medical and Dental Clinic (MDC). Once the DepEd and CHed release their own additional guidelines, if any, we expect to be fully compliant with these. Furthermore, our compliance of all rules are monitored by ISO, a third-party audit that checks our compliance with procedures.

No face-to-face for now. President Rodrigo Duterte has announced that there will be no face-to-face until a vaccine is developed. DepEd has followed this pronouncement. CHed has said that for higher education, face-to-face with physical distancing can start when an area is under Modified GCQ, but only after September 1, and depending on additional regulations of the local government unit (Mandaluyong City, in our case). Given all these conditionalities, the dates for the physical opening of classes at all levels remains unclear.

How do we estimate then when students will be allowed back? While a vaccine may take a while¹, we do also know the most common measure for deciding is when the daily number of *new* COVID-19 cases decreases and approaches zero.² This has been described in media as “flattening the curve.” JRU’s forecast of curve flattening uses the SEIR epidemic model, and estimates flattening to happen from **October-December**.³ The UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team⁴ uses the same type of model, with similar results.

¹ We had the opportunity to recently listen to the chairman of Moderna, which expects to go to Phase 3 of its vaccine trials this July. This is the last step before US Government approvals. He said that a “reasonable expectation” for a vaccine to be available is first to second quarter of 2021.

² JRU is one of the few Philippine universities monitoring – through our partners – the protocols used by other countries that have opened up their schools, thus expanding our knowledge of what is best for our students. What we have seen in most countries is that face-to-face starts when the daily count of new cases is low (often less than 10/day).

³ JRU COVID-19 Research Team. 2020. *Modelling and Simulating the COVID-19 Outbreak in NCR*. Jose Rizal University Internal Report. SEIR stands for Susceptible-Exposed-Infectious-Recovered.

⁴ University of the Philippines. 2020. *Policynote1-UP-Preparing for a post ECQ scenario: Analysis and recommendations*. [online] Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r3W4b9jvOz9JC96nCthpS79E6lZZUesd/view> [Accessed 3 June 2020]

Our model suggests that face-to-face will still be in October at the earliest. When a decision by the Government is made, we plan to ask students to come back little by little, guided by our own forecasts of the pandemic. We will then make a separate announcement for that at the appropriate time.

Online health. Health is also about helping students cope with learning online under quarantine conditions. We thus launched our Online Counseling & Consulting Service for students last May 5, 2020. That service can be found [here](#). This service aims to assist students to cope socially and emotionally during this pandemic. It is a secure venue where a student can freely express thoughts and feelings with a university counselor (through a variety of platforms, like email, sms, video meeting or call), while protecting his or her [privacy](#).

2. School Fees Will Be Lower

COVID-19 has caused unique financial difficulties for students and families. Therefore: (1) there will be **no increase** in total school fees for SY 2020-2021, and (2) our total school fees (TSF) for SY 2020-2021 will be **less** than our TSF for SY 2019-2020. The detailed schedule of fees can be found [here](#).

Reducing school fees presents a difficult balance between keeping education affordable and sustaining the quality of the University and its employees. But because of the pandemic, we opted to reduce fees even if our services are available online – and the reason no miscellaneous fee is zeroed out.⁵ For example, with the library fee, we have invested heavily over the years in online library searches, and online journals and textbooks. The library therefore will be providing close to full services (with the exception of physical study areas) during any quarantine. That influenced the amount of discount we put into that fee. Online also has its own costs. We worked therefore to balance these cost increases and reductions, with the end-goal of a lower TSF than last year.

In addition to lower school fees, your “total spend” (the amount you spend on education) should go down in SY 2020-2021. There should be savings in transportation costs, and the University has reduced or removed several co-curricular fees (such as field trips or third-party certifications).

Finally, we always make a point of letting you know how JRU stands compared to its peers: autonomous NCR universities. We maintain our position as among if not the affordable autonomous university in the NCR, a position that should strengthen with these fee reductions.

We hope these adjustments bring you some comfort. We are trying to find the best way forward for affordability and at the same time maintain our responsibility to delivery quality.

3. Learning: You Have Options

The options. We recognize students and parents may be concerned about physically going back to school, when the government decides to allow that. Thus, we want to give you a full range of flexible learning options and the choice to decide what works for them given their unique circumstances:

- **Option 1: Full online.** You have the choice to do the entire semester or schoolyear online. Our online model is designed so that all students will be able to cope (including students with low bandwidth or weak internet connection). Almost all of our online will be asynchronous (which will have a lower data requirement), and also available through download by email.⁶

⁵ These fees have funded and will continue to fund making these services available online.

⁶ In rare cases, these can be delivered directly to your home address by courier.

- **Option 2: Combination online and face-to-face.** We have a version that asks the student to come to school 1-2 days per week, once this is allowed by the government. As mentioned previously, unless the government changes its mind, we anticipate this happening around October-December.
- **Option 3: The Switch.** Within reason (or, please don't change your mind every week), parents and students have the option to change between full online or the combination, during the semester and schoolyear.

Why give a choice? Even if the government allows for face-to-face, some students and parents will want to stay home. Others, however, may be ready to go to school. We believe it is wrong to make all parents and students follow one approach. So we designed a system that allows the student or parent to go with the approach best for their unique situation. We have merged the principles of on-line, blended, study, and distance education to design an experience which is truly Rizalian in nature.

JRU's leadership in online. Can JRU deliver on such a system? Yes, we can. It is important for students and parents to know that JRU is one of the top universities in the country in terms of online expertise: experience, delivery, content creation, exposure to students, and training of faculty.

- **Long experience.** We have been in online and blended learning since 2006. That's over 15 years, making us among the earliest users of this innovation.
- **Best technology.** Our current platform, Canvas, is the third iteration (think "Ver. 3.0") of our platforms, and is recognized worldwide as the leader in online learning platforms. JRU is the first adopter of Canvas in the Philippines, and one of only a few schools using the same complete, professional version used by the top universities in the world. We do not use the "free version."
- **Student experience.** In the last Canvas Experience Survey, 96% of our students can access Canvas outside the university. Above all, 94% of students mentioned that they understand the lessons better using online learning materials in Canvas, even if using mobile phones.
- **Deep faculty training.** For the past 13 years, a total of almost 4,000 faculty across all divisions or 380 faculty each academic year have been trained to teach online. That's more than 17,000 hours of face to face and online training and consultations. That's more than 25,000 hours of face to face and online trainings, equivalent to about 6 years of non-stop, daily training on online teaching! Over 50% of our faculty have taught online the past year.
- **Full content.** Since the launch of computer-aided instruction in SY 2006-2007, more than 53,751 hours of content has been delivered online. In basic education, a student spends an average of 240 hours working on technology-enabled modules in one school year just for online lessons. A college student, prior to COVID-19, would experience more than 54% of his/her courses in online mode, an average of 290 hours in his/her entire journey in the university.
- **Continuous improvements.** In caring about good education, we want to make sure that care extends to the online environment. This means we continually listen and adjust. We've been monitoring our Special Transition Term (the period from May-July for this year) of over 250 online classes, to see what we can improve for August. Key requests have come up from the data: lenient deadlines, more time to answer quizzes and other assessments, support for data connectivity and internet connections, flexibility in assigned activities for those with limited bandwidth and gadgets, and suggestions on improving learning (e.g., better learning support, mentor availability, limiting video requirements, more details on the activity calendar).

Technical requirements. Please refer to the table below. We have set up these minimum requirements in anticipation that you will not need to buy a new gadget. However, should you want to upgrade your device, we recommend you invest towards a larger screen and better internet connections.

Device (any of the following)	Operating System Any of the following (OS depends on your device)	Browser (Any)	Internet Connectivity and Data (Any)
Laptop or desktop (at least 1 GB RAM, 2 GHz processor)	Windows XP SP3 and newer	Internet Explorer 8	Internet speed: at least 512 kbps (equivalent mobile speed is 3G)
Tablet	Mac OSX 10.6 and newer	Chrome 19	Data: 4 GB per month (used for learning material)
Smartphone	Linux-Chrome OS	Safari 5	
	Mobile OS Native App Support	Firefox 12	
	iOS 5 and newer		
	Android 2.3 and newer		

Internet support. We have negotiated special packages with Globe and Smart regarding mobile data and equipment pricing, available for purchase exclusively for the JRU community. These packages will include up to 1 GB daily data allowances for Netflix, Youtube, Facebook, Zoom, Wikipedia, and Microsoft 365 access, depending on the carrier. (We are in the process of requesting that Canvas LMS be included in the 1 GB allowance.) We will present these separately as a menu of choices.

We have also worked with Microsoft to obtain free Microsoft 365 licenses for anyone with a jru.edu address, in addition to the Google Suite access you enjoy as a member of the JRU Community and are negotiating special pricing for those of you who want to purchase equipment.

Adjustments due to COVID-19. Naturally, we made adjustments to our online systems due to COVID-19. Here are four points to know:

- Our biggest adjustment and shift on our current instructional design is the safety and health of the student. While we know that students will learn through our systems, our new challenge is to make sure you stay safe and healthy while learning with us. Much of our time now is spent designing the potential face-to-face periods of the future with this in mind, and the support systems needed for a good online experience. Any time a parent or student is uncomfortable with face-to-face, they can opt for an online experience.
- Our face-to-face (whenever it is allowed by government) will not be the traditional faced-to-face that happened before the pandemic. We know that face-to-face when combined with digital learning is best for helping learn the material already available online. We will expect students must review the material before the face-to-face sessions.
- We are including a special approach for Kinder to Grade 3. Students need routine and structure, and this will be more challenging for very young kids. Thus, parents for these grades will need to be our partners (or identify an adult partner if they are unavailable) in teaching the kids and ensuring they adopt to the routine of online. We will be providing training for these partners prior to the start of classes.
- Lastly, we will have differences in how we handle labs and on-the-job-training (OJTs) for undergraduate students.
 - *OJTs.* To date, CHed has allowed for alternatives to OJT while under community quarantine. This will apply to all non-PRC courses, such as Hospitality and Tourism Management and Business Administration and Accountancy. These colleges are currently reworking the OJT requirements, to allow for non-OJT alternatives or virtual OJT (with industry partners). Degrees leading to PRC exams (such as CPA, education, nursing/RLE, criminology, and ECE) are still waiting for advice from the CHed and the PRC, but are already also in discussion with our

industry partners for possible solutions. In all cases, students will not be required to do physical OJT, internship or RLE unless allowed by CHED.

- *Labs.* When the learning from lab classes can be done online/virtually, the University shall convert that lab module online. For labs that require the physical presence of the student, the University shall move this to the latter part of the semester (around mid-October onwards), in anticipation of face-to-face.

I have opted to go into detail about the Three Concerns. We feel that the details give you a better sense of how prepared we are for the opening of classes, and how safe the student will be at JRU. As we said at the beginning of this letter, JRU cares about good education, and we will keep that promise to you.

Other Announcements

Allow me then to end this letter with a few other details about enrolment, payments, and our academic calendar for SY 2020-2021.

Enrolment

DATE 2020	COLLEGE (and LAW)	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
July 13 (M)	Fourth/Fifth Year	Grade 12 ABM, STEM,HUMSS/GAS	Grade 10	Grade 6
July 14 (T)	Freshmen	Grade 12 A&D / Sports / TECHVOC	Grade 7	Kinder and Grade I
July 15 (W)		Grade 11	Grade 8	All other Old Pupils
July 16 (TH)	Second Year		Grade 9	
July 17 (F)	Third Year	Transfer and Open Enrolment	Transfer and Open Enrolment	Transfer and Open Enrolment
July 18 (S) Onwards	Transfer and Open Enrolment			
Aug 10 (M)	Classes Begin			

Enrolment Procedures. Students can enroll online by logging into our [Student's Portal](#).

- New students and transferees may apply [here](#) using the Applicant Access Module.
- Returning/current students may enroll [here](#) through their Student Access Module.

For those who wish to enroll manually, please visit the Registrar's office (Monday to Friday, from 8:00am to 5:00pm) at JRU.

Once admitted, the applicant may now proceed with the registration of the subjects and payment through the JRU's payment facilities, [here](#).

The applicant will be considered officially enrolled once paid the required initial downpayment. An official JRU email account and user-credentials access and password will be sent via email entered during application.

Payments. JRU has several payment facilities: online, over-the-counter (banks and Cebuana Lhullier), PayMaya and GCash, and of course, at the JRU campus itself. A complete list with instructions is available [here](#). The initial downpayment for any course at any level is P2,800 (except for Law School and Graduate School).

Except for over- the-counter payments and online bills payment, please take a screenshot of proof of payment and email to Ms. Amie G. Pilande of the Student Accounts Section (accounting@jru.edu). Be sure to keep a copy of your proof of payment.

The University Calendar, SY 2020-2021

Date	Activity	Division
August 10, 2020	Classes Begin	ES, JHS, SHS, CO, LAW, GS
September 7-8	First Grading Period	ES
September 10-11		JHS
September 17-19		SHS
September 14-19	Preliminary Exam	CO
		LAW
September 21-26	Midterm Exam	GS
October 1-2	First Grading Period	ES
October 14-15		JHS
October 26-31	Midterm Exam	CO
		LAW
October 28-30		SHS
November 4-5	Second Grading Period	ES
November 9-10		JHS
November 16-21	Final Examination	GS
December 2-3	Second Grading Period	ES
December 3-4		JHS
December 7	Classes Begin	GS
December 7,9-12	Final Examination	CO
		LAW
December 10-12		SHS
January 15-16	3rd Grading Period	ES
January 18-19		JHS
January 18	Classes Begin	CO
		LAW
		SHS
February 5-6	3rd Grading Period	ES
February 23-24		JHS
March 1-6	Preliminary Exam	CO
		LAW
		SHS
March 4-6		SHS
March 16-17	4th Grading Period	ES
March 23-24		JHS
April 5-8	Midterm Exam	CO
		LAW
April 6-8		SHS
April 15-16	4th Grading Period	ES
April 22-23		JHS
May 3-5	Final Examination (graduating)	SHS
May 6-8		CO
		LAW
May 18-19	Graduating-Exam	ES
	Student for Promotion-Exam	JHS

ES-Elementary School SHS-Senior High School GS-Graduate School JHS-Junior High School CO-College

You may see the complete version of the school calendar [here](#).

Sample schedules. These online schedules show sample days for elementary, junior high school and senior high school. College schedules will depend on your enrolled courses.

GRADE 1-2		GRADE 7 - 8			Grade 11	Grade 12
Time	TUESDAY	Time	TUESDAY	Time	Tuesday	Tuesday
8:00-8:20	Introduction/Objectives of the Day /Day tasks instructions	7:20- 7:40	Introduction/Objectives of the Day /Day tasks instructions	7:00 - 7:30	Introduction/Objectives of the Day /Day tasks instructions	
8:40-9:30	MATH	7:40-8:30	MATH	7:30 - 9:00	Empowerment Technologies	Integral Calculus
9:30-9:40	BREAK	8:30-9:10	BTEC	9:00 - 10:00	CONSULTATION	CONSULTATION
9:40-10:30	MATH	9:10 - 9:30	BREAK	10:00 - 10:30	BREAK	BREAK
10:30-10:40	BREAK	9:30 -10:20	SOCS	10:30 - 11:30	Biology (T-B)	21st Century Literature
10:40-11:20	LANGUAGE	10:20 -11:00	CHED	11:30 - 12:00	BREAK	BREAK
11:20-12:00	SOCIAL	11:00 - 11:40	BREAK	12:00 - 1:00	Physics 1(T-B)	CONSULTATION
12:00-12:40	LUNCH			1:00 - 2:00	CONSULTATION	Drafting (T-B)
12:40-1:15	BREAK	11:40 - 12:30	SCIENCE	2:00 - 2:30	BREAK	BREAK
1:15-2:30	CONSULTATION	1:00 - 2:30	CONSULTATION	2:30 - 3:30	PEH 1	Chemistry (T-B)
				3:30 - 5:00	CONSULTATION	CONSULTATION

Contact Us

I assume you will have other **questions or suggestions** not covered here. Contact us at jru@jru.edu, or use the more specific information below:

Enrollment and General Inquiries	mco@jru.edu	+63917-637-9730
AIMS and JRU Email Concerns	ito@jru.edu	+63998-884-5269
Graduation and Documents	registrar@jru.edu	+63915-881-2276
Student Accounts and Financial Concerns	accounting@jru.edu	+63915-065-6941

Rest assured that we will continue to be open to any opportunities that we deem will improve our services. Stay safe and healthy, everyone. I hope to see you all in August.

Mabuhay Rizal!


Vincent K. Fabella
 University President