

I hope this letter is finding you and your families well in this new academic year. I'm writing to you today to present our plan for the Sternberg Science Camps 2021 summer programs.

Each year, the planning process for the next year's camps begins in late summer/early autumn, and takes through spring to fully complete. Last winter, with the advent of COVID-19, we made the difficult but correct decision to cancel our in-person camps rather than risk the health of our students, staff, their respective families. While we were all saddened not to be able to conduct our normal in-person camps, our instructional teams valiantly took up the task of providing the best possible programs for all of our virtual-camp students. Based on our student and parent feedback, our staff teams did a phenomenal job. I could not be prouder of all the work they did in such a short time span to provide excellent camps for our participants.

As we head into autumn, we find ourselves still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since spring, we have also learned more about the short and longer-term consequences of COVID-19 infection. We have seen the efforts of schools, athletics organizations, and other entities to control the spread of the virus. We have also had greater opportunity to consult with and listen to expert outlook assessment on the pandemic. Presently case numbers in the United States are rising, and realistic estimates for mass availability of a vaccine are projected out to late spring/early summer 2021.

With COVID-19 still posing an immensely serious health risk for the foreseeable future, we have made the difficult but responsible decision to continue with only virtual camps in 2021. While we too want to get back to our in-person camps, it simply will not be justifiably safe to do so until greater steps have been taken to curtail the infection rates of COVID-19 nationwide. My sincere hope is that a vaccine, combined with more aggressive action to contain the virus, will allow a return to in-person camps in 2022. I understand that for many, this will be disappointing news. However, based on the best information available to us, I firmly believe this is the most responsible course of action.

Finally, I am excited to announce that we will be more than doubling our virtual summer camp offerings in 2021. We have also been keeping your feedback close in mind, and will be making the following changes across all of our virtual camps:

- Increasing fun social time and opportunities for students and staff to engage with each other outside of academic portions of camp.
- Finding ways to keep everyone feeling less fatigued with Zoom-time without losing the depth of content, engagement, and excitement we achieved this past summer.
- Written schedule outlines provided to participants in advance for each camp.
- Written items lists for each camp kit provided in the box.

We are presently on-track to open registration in early December at the latest. Please let me know if you have any questions about the 2021 camps.

Take care.

Yours,

David Levering

Sternberg Science Camps Director