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Fwd: COVID-19 Update from President Hatch

1 message

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To: pb919@georgetown.edu

Thu, Apr 2, 2020 at 4:29 PM

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From: **Nathan O. Hatch** <nhatch@wfu.edu>
Date: Mon, Mar 30, 2020 at 4:30 PM
Subject: COVID-19 Update from President Hatch
To:

Dear Wake Forest Community,

My message today is one of continued gratitude. Thank you, to our faculty and staff working to sustain our vital educational mission through remote learning options. Thank you, to the essential staff still on campus delivering resources and support to approximately 400 students, who, out of necessity, still call our campus home. And thank you, to our students who are adapting to a new learning experience and adjusting expectations along with the rest of us for how this semester will play out. I am grateful to all of you for your flexibility in these unprecedented times.

The public health community is now unified in their advice that we will not be able to resume in-person classes this spring. Therefore, Wake Forest courses will be delivered remotely for the remainder of the semester. This one decision has an impact on final exams, refunds for housing and meal plans, summer school and summer international trips, and the logistics of safely retrieving personal belongings from residence halls. Of significant importance to all graduate and undergraduate members of the Class of 2020, we must also rethink our plans for a traditional Commencement ceremony this May.

Final Exams

Final exams will be delivered virtually. The University has extended the pass/fail decision period to minimize the impact of final exams being delivered remotely.

Academic deans will communicate with faculty about options and resources to support remote delivery of exams. Students should direct questions to their professors for information about expectations specific to each course.

Refunds for Housing and Meal Plans

Undergraduate students will receive a prorated refund for meal plans and on-campus housing and will receive information about their refunds on or before April 17. Please note, there is a high degree of variability based on room and board packages, and we have created different options to claim your refund. We are grateful to those families who have indicated a desire to decline any refund and to contribute these funds as a charitable gift to the [Wake Forest Crisis Response Fund](#), and we will provide information about how to do so.

Retrieving Personal Belongings From Residence Halls

Wake Forest will continue to put the safety and health of students, their families and University staff among our top priorities. The University asks students and families NOT to travel to our Winston-Salem campus to retrieve personal belongings. Access to residence halls is currently restricted to those currently approved to be living on campus.

On March 27, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper issued a ["stay at home" order](#) that runs through April 29. This order is in addition to the "stay at home" order issued earlier in the week by the mayor of Winston-Salem. These orders restrict travel and activities throughout the state with exceptions for essential activities as defined by these orders. On or before April 30, we will send an update about plans regarding retrieval of personal belongings, as well as options for storage of such belongings.

Commencement for Class of 2020

My heart goes out to the Class of 2020. I regret the need to postpone the opportunity to walk across the stage and hear your name called in front of your classmates, family, friends and faculty. We will soon address plans to celebrate your accomplishments in an email specific to each undergraduate, graduate or professional school.

We will be in touch to seek your input to help shape the postponed Commencement experience. In general, you can anticipate two things:

1. A virtual conferring of degrees on May 18
2. An in-person Commencement ceremony when it is safe to gather in large numbers (undergraduate, graduate and professional schools will each tailor a ceremony to meet the needs of their respective students)

Future Academic Sessions

Based on current information, we have made the following adjustments to future academic sessions:

- Summer Session I classes will not be held on campus, but opportunities will be available for remote and online classes.
- All summer Wake Forest-sponsored study abroad programs are regrettably cancelled.
- Our ability to hold Summer Session II classes on campus has yet to be determined, but remote and online classes will be available.
- We plan to conduct fall semester classes on campus.
- We plan to conduct fall semester Wake Forest-sponsored study abroad/away undergraduate programs as usual; if you have questions, contact the [Center for Global Programs and Studies](#).

Please note that these plans are subject to change depending on evolving circumstances, and an update will be sent should changes be required.

This worldwide pandemic continues to stretch us all to think differently about how we create, share and acquire knowledge. It is redefining how we connect and how we celebrate. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the way the Wake Forest community is facing each new challenge head on, moving together toward a better tomorrow.

With great appreciation,

Nathan O. Hatch
President

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