
Fwd: Brown's commitment to Providence and Rhode Island

1 message

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To: Pb919@georgetown.edu

Sat, Apr 4, 2020 at 7:39 PM

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From: **President Christina H. Paxson** <president@brown.edu>
Date: Fri, Apr 3, 2020 at 2:24 PM
Subject: Brown's commitment to Providence and Rhode Island
To: <community.announce.allbrown@lists.brown.edu>



BROWN

Dear Members of the Brown University Community,

For over two and a half centuries, the health and vitality of Brown and that of Providence and Rhode Island have been deeply intertwined. With the spread of COVID-19 across the country and the world, Brown and the city and state we call home are confronting an unprecedented set of challenges. We all feel the severe effects of this pandemic – in our jobs, our schools, and our neighborhoods.

The Brown community has come together in a wonderful way to support our local community on a multitude of fronts. An effort by Brown faculty and staff has gathered more than 4,000 N95 masks and other essential medical supplies for donation to Rhode Island health care agencies and providers. Over 150 Brown medical students have volunteered to provide direct assistance to health care providers and agencies. And researchers from the Department of Economics and the School of Public Health have partnered with the Rhode Island Department of Health to develop methods to better track the spread of COVID-19. These are only a few of the many examples in recent weeks.

In recognition of the rapidly evolving impact of COVID-19 on our local community, Brown will invest in three new initiatives that build on Brown's longstanding commitment to Providence and Rhode Island. These initial efforts will focus on addressing the immediate needs of local residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations and providing urgent medical support.

Community Meal Service

To provide immediate local relief, Brown has partnered with the City of Providence and the Healthy Communities Office to purchase and distribute meals for residents of the city with food security needs. Brown Dining Services will purchase and prepare five-day food packs in on-campus dining facilities while following strict public health and safety protocols regarding social distancing and sanitation. This initiative will launch on Tuesday, April 7, and continue through the month of May. We anticipate this partnership will produce 24,000 meals for over 1,600 people during the course of a two-month period. With this support, we hope to help some of our most vulnerable neighbors in this challenging time.

Brown COVID-19 Research Seed Fund

The Brown COVID-19 Research Seed Fund is a one-time funding mechanism intended to fast track innovative research proposals that directly address the urgent needs of the COVID-19 pandemic. These awards will support research with the potential for significant and rapid impact on human health with respect to the disease (COVID-19) or the causal virus (SARS-CoV-2), and research that involves the use of Brown's facilities to produce products of immediate need for the health care system in Rhode Island and the nation. For example, Brown researchers have already manufactured and

donated enough viral transport medium, a solution used for COVID-19 testing, for 2,100 tests, and we anticipate that these efforts will continue. Faculty members can direct inquiries and submit proposals to research_opps@brown.edu.

Support for Local Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations

In addition, Brown is undertaking an array of initiatives to support local businesses and nonprofit organizations during this time of need. The Real Estate & Auxiliary Housing Office granted rent deferrals for the month of April and May to retail tenants who have ceased normal operations due to state-mandated closures of non-essential businesses to stem the spread of the pandemic. The Brown Arts Initiative launched a Community Development Grant that will award \$2,000 grants to 10 local artists in recognition of the severe impact of the pandemic on the arts community. And over 300 Brown faculty and staff contributed \$28,175 to 401Gives, an online fundraising campaign for local nonprofits. This is in addition to Brown's \$100,000 contribution to the Rhode Island COVID-19 Response Fund, a joint effort by United Way of Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Foundation to support local nonprofit organizations affected by the pandemic.

There is a great deal of uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, and the long-term financial consequences for Rhode Island, the country and the world are unclear. Brown administrators are in regular communication with city and state leaders and are exploring a multitude of ways in which the University can continue to support the fight against COVID-19. Brown also remains in discussions with the state and health system partners about using unoccupied dormitory spaces to meet needs identified by the state and others on the front lines of the pandemic. Over the coming weeks and months, it is imperative that we all work together to maintain our community.

I am inspired and moved by the many students and employees of Brown who continue to show tremendous commitment to supporting the Providence and Rhode Island community. I am deeply grateful for everyone's ongoing engagement and partnership with our local community during this public health crisis.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson
President

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