
Extending Virtual Learning Environment through the End of the Semester

1 message

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**Georgetown University
Office of the President**

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Members of the Georgetown University Community:

I write to provide an update on the University's ongoing response to the novel coronavirus. On Wednesday, I shared with you that, on March 16th, our University community would be [moving to a virtual learning environment until further notice](#).

Over the past two days, there have been significant developments in the global, national, and local responses to the ongoing spread of the virus. The World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic, with more than 135,000 cases worldwide and more than 1,700 known cases in the United States. The Federal Government has issued new guidance discouraging any travel of U.S. citizens abroad; instructing all travelers from specified countries in Europe, including U.S. citizens, to self-quarantine for 14-days upon their arrival to the United States; and, beginning later today, restricting travel of non-U.S. citizens to the United States from [the Schengen Area of Europe](#). In Washington, D.C., Mayor Bowser has declared both a state of emergency and a public health emergency and D.C. Health has recommended the cancelling of large non-essential gatherings.

As I shared with you in my message earlier this week, we have been animated by a commitment to protecting our community and to ensuring the continuity of our academic programs. This is a time in which our personal and collective actions can have a powerful impact on slowing the transmission of this virus and reducing its impact on our global community. The actions we are taking at Georgetown seek to mitigate transmission of the virus—to slow “community spread”—and to protect the most vulnerable from its worst impacts.

I would like to share a few updates with you:

- Given these rapidly evolving circumstances, we have made the determination that we will continue our virtual learning environment ***through the end of the semester, to include final exams.*** (Our plans for Commencement remain under review.)
- On Wednesday, we strongly encouraged undergraduate students to remain at their permanent residences or to return to campus only briefly while they collect essential belongings. ***With our decision to extend our virtual learning environment through the conclusion of the academic year, undergraduate students will soon be receiving guidance about a phased process for moving out of the residence halls.*** This move out process will unfold over the course of the next two weeks, concluding Sunday, March 29th, to adhere to the best practices in reducing the density of people on our campus and to provide as much flexibility as possible to our students and families. We are developing alternatives if a student has a significant reason preventing their return to campus.
- We continue to strongly recommend that undergraduates who are living off-campus return to their permanent residences.
- Campus remains open with key services to support our current operating status. We recognize the important need that some of our students have to remain on campus, and, at the same time, are seeking to take steps to appropriately reduce the density of our campus. We will be engaging with students who have indicated a compelling need to stay on campus to understand and address their circumstances.
- We have developed a framework to prorate room and board, beginning March 16th, for the remainder of the semester for those students who will be moving out of our undergraduate residence halls. Additional details will be provided later today. Residential Law students will be receiving a separate communication.
- With the designation of the Schengen Area of Europe [by the Centers for Disease Control and Protection as Level 3](#), we have informed our students who are studying abroad in those locations that they must return home and have strongly recommended all students in study abroad return to their permanent addresses if possible.
- Spring practices and competitions have been cancelled for all intercollegiate athletics at Georgetown. This is consistent with the BIG EAST's cancellation of all 2020 spring sports competitions and the NCAA's cancellation of all winter and spring championships.

We have previously provided guidance for our employees regarding a flexible teleworking environment; resources for faculty who are adapting their course material for virtual learning; and direction regarding campus gatherings and university-sponsored travel, both domestically and

internationally. This guidance provides the framework that will continue to shape our efforts as we transition into this virtual learning environment for our Georgetown community.

Additional communications will provide further detail about these steps I have outlined and we will continue to provide updates. Please continue to review our [Coronavirus Resource page](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information about our ongoing response.

These past few weeks have illuminated new ways of enacting our commitment to the common good. This effort to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic requires the work of all of us. As we seek to better understand this moment and respond to the challenging dynamics that define it, I am grateful to each of you for the depth of your commitment to one another, to our community, and to the common good.

Let us continue to keep in our thoughts all those affected by this virus, all those whose work is to deepen our understanding of COVID-19, and all those who are providing critical care to those impacted around our world.

Sincerely,

John J. DeGioia