

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: March 16, 2020
TO: Campus Community
FROM: Thomas A. Parham, Ph.D.
President
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Thomas Parham".

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak continues to unfold rapidly, the university must adapt in our response to these changing conditions, with health and safety as our number one priority. I am acutely aware that collective anxiety about this health crisis grows daily, impacting our ability to carry out our academic mission. We must give ourselves time to evaluate the best way for the campus to move forward.

With this in mind, I have made the following decisions regarding university operations and academic instruction.

Remote Work

We are making provisions to accommodate reduction of staff and students on campus while we consider alternate modes of instruction and service delivery. Beginning Tuesday, March 17, through Friday, March 20, all staff will work remotely. Some positions will require individuals to be on campus to maintain critical operations and campus safety. Staff members should work with their supervisors on determining the need for them to be on premise. Staff who cannot perform their work remotely, after consultations with their supervisor and vice president, will be placed on administrative leave with pay.

During this time, my administration will be finalizing a university-wide emergency telecommuting policy in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Campus is not closing, although some services will not be available. We will continue to assess the ability of campus units to provide services, and if any are deemed unable to continue, provisions will be made.

University Student Housing is fully staffed and will remain open for those student residents who do not wish to return home. We will work with residents who stay on campus to ensure their basic needs are met.

Instruction Suspended

Effective today through Sunday, March 22, all instruction will be suspended – including all existing online classes. Alternative instruction previously planned to commence Wednesday, March 18, will now be postponed also through March 22. Faculty should continue the work they've begun to transition to alternative instruction. On Friday, March 20, we will announce further updates regarding this decision.

--

We understand this is not an ideal situation. We have reached a point where I believe this crisis will greatly impact the ability of the university to provide quality education to our standards of excellence.

Even though this unprecedented event requires that we scale back operations, we remain committed to supporting our students and their academic aspirations. We will continue the work on creating solutions that best deliver essential student services in alternative forms.

In the meantime, we thank you for your continued understanding and patience as we navigate this uncharted terrain.