

TO: Faculty, Staff, and Students
FROM: Jere W. Morehead, President
S. Jack Hu, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Ryan A. Nesbit, Vice President for Finance and Administration
RE: Continuity of Instruction and Operations

DATE: March 13, 2020

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we work together to overcome the challenges posed by the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The situation we are facing marks an unprecedented time for our University and for our state, nation and world. Although we are in uncharted territory, we want to assure you that one commitment remains first and foremost in our planning: the health, wellbeing, and safety of our campus community.

Our leadership team and the many staff members who provide critical campus support are working tirelessly, around the clock, to mitigate the impact of this pandemic on our community. We are devoting every available resource at our disposal to addressing this significant challenge. We will not waver in this commitment.

As we hope you are aware, **UGA has temporarily suspended instruction for two weeks beginning Monday, March 16, 2020.** This email includes the latest information regarding that decision. This information will be posted to www.uga.edu, and we encourage you to begin checking the [University of Georgia coronavirus website](#) regularly for updates.

TELECOMMUTING AND FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, the University of Georgia will move to telework options for those staff members who can conduct their job duties remotely without interruption. Supervisors also have been directed to implement flexible schedules that will reduce the number of employees physically on campus to the minimal level required at any given time to sustain service, safety, and compliance. Staff members should consult with their supervisors to determine their individual status and options.

Undergraduate and graduate student workers should be allowed to work if they fit reasonably into unit business continuity and associated staffing plans. Telework options are recommended, when appropriate. Students should consult with their supervisors to determine their individual status. The Graduate School will offer more specific guidance for graduate students on assistantships.

ONLINE INSTRUCTION

During this two-week suspension of classes, all faculty are asked to telework and plan for their courses to transition to online instruction and test their readiness. Resources to aid faculty in making this transition can be found at https://ovpi.uga.edu/initiatives/teaching_learning_continuity/.

At this time, no other adjustment to the academic calendar is anticipated for the Spring 2020 semester. However, as this situation is evolving, faculty are asked to anticipate the possibility that the remainder of their courses may need to be delivered online. Faculty are asked to plan appropriately and exercise judgment in ensuring that required contact hours are met through online instruction by the best means appropriate in their fields. Additional academic planning information will be forthcoming.

Students should not be required to complete academic work during this two-week period; however, faculty are encouraged to maintain contact with their students and support them during this period.

Exception: Current Online Courses

The only instruction that will continue during this two-week period will be courses that are currently operating online. Per an exception granted by the University System of Georgia, these courses will continue as scheduled to minimize disruption.

STUDENT ADVISING

Although classes have been suspended for two weeks, academic advising will continue as scheduled so that students will be ready to register for fall classes when registration opens in early April. All appointments will be handled remotely.

Students—if you already have an appointment scheduled during the next two weeks, keep your appointment and check your UGA email for instructions from your advisor on how you will be advised remotely, as no appointments will be conducted face to face during this time. If you do not yet have an appointment, use SAGE to schedule one as soon as possible. If you have any questions or issues, do not hesitate to email your advisor directly—although response times may be delayed, UGA academic advisors are committed to supporting you during this time and will regularly provide information on [Advising at a Distance](#) during this period.

NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL

All non-essential travel—including travel to conferences (particularly those held internationally and out-of-state), training, site visits and any non-essential activities—is suspended during this period. We encourage you and your supervisors to consider online opportunities for professional development and scholarly activity.

RETURN FROM INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Any students, faculty or staff who have returned from international travel in the past 14 days **must** self-quarantine until they have been without symptoms for a period of 14 days from the date of entering/reentering the United States before returning to the University of Georgia. This requirement is issued in the best interest of the health and safety of our entire campus and surrounding community. It is necessitated by the U.S. State Department’s declaration of a Global Level 3 Health Advisory.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

We strongly encourage any required in-person meetings to be moved to an electronic format. Visits to campus are strongly discouraged. Any tours that were to be held during this time should be canceled and replaced with virtual options for online content.

CAMPUS EVENTS

Unit heads are asked to review all of their events that are scheduled through March 29, 2020, to determine whether they should be continued. Virtual options are encouraged to support the need for social distancing.

Decisions regarding campus events after March 29, 2020, will be made at a later date.

SICK AND ANNUAL LEAVE

We are aware that employees are going to be faced with many challenges. Some may need to provide for care of children, sick family members, and other situations related to COVID-19. Others may be at high risk of illness or exposure. In all such matters, supervisors are encouraged to exercise flexibility in accommodating these situations.

- It is imperative that you stay home if you or a member of your family are ill.
- In the interest of maintaining a workplace that is safe for all, supervisors are permitted to ask an employee who is showing signs of illness to leave the workplace and take appropriate leave.
- All available leave will be allowed for COVID-19 illness or to minimize exposure for those that are high-risk and unable to telework.
- Development of plans for employees who exhaust their paid leave options are under consideration. FMLA leave will be available to eligible employees who contract COVID-19 or are caring for a qualified family member that has contracted COVID-19.

We will continue to work with the University System of Georgia to develop plans that are tailored to meet the specific needs of our institution. Further decisions that affect the continuity of our operations—including the status of campus events and instruction beyond March 29, 2020—will be provided to you via updates as the situation evolves.

In closing, we would remind you that each of us has important responsibility in managing this public health crisis. You can find the latest CDC guidelines here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>.

We are calling on each of you to closely review and abide by these guidelines. We must stand together, support each other and protect each other during this difficult time. We know we will because we have often demonstrated a great capacity to care for one another and to care for others. That is a big part of who we are.

Together, the members of the Bulldog Nation will persevere.