

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students:

I wanted to take a moment this morning—as we begin another week in these uncertain times—to let you know how proud I am of the way you are responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

Last Monday, we announced the University's move to online instruction for the remainder of the semester—a monumental task, to be sure. What followed has been quite remarkable: our campus community has united like never before to address many obstacles and adapt our campus operations. Over the course of the last week, I have witnessed countless examples of altruism, compassion, resilience, and determination on the part of our faculty, staff, and students. This terrible crisis is revealing the best of who we are and what our institution values.

Words cannot express how grateful I am for all that you are doing to help the University navigate this unprecedented and often stressful situation. As we work diligently to continue delivering our essential mission, however, we must keep one priority firmly entrenched at the forefront of our efforts: maintaining the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community. There can be no greater priority. Our thoughts and prayers are with those at our University who are suffering from this dreadful illness; to the brave and dedicated health care providers who are fighting it; and to the leaders of our state, nation, and world as they strive to make decisions to slow the spread of this contagion. I am particularly grateful for the excellent work of many UGA faculty members who are helping inform decision-makers and find a cure.

Now I want to speak directly to our seniors, graduate, and professional students who are approaching graduation in May. I share your disappointment over the directive to cancel Commencement. I understand how frustrated you are at this time. I am frustrated, too. You should know that I have assembled a group to explore a range of options for honoring and celebrating your graduation at the appropriate time. Once we see significant progress in stopping this pandemic, the University will be in a much better position to determine what might be possible. Until then, I appreciate your patience as we work through this dilemma.

In closing, we will face many expected and unexpected challenges as we transition to online instruction in the days and weeks ahead. Let us remain patient, supportive, and cooperative as we navigate the coming days and weeks. The reality is that our University has never before faced a set of circumstances this complex and this challenging, but as long as we continue to work together—as long as we remain focused on finding solutions—we will succeed. The spirit and determination of our UGA community will prevail.

With warmest regards,

Jere Morehead
President