

UW Madison: To our students, faculty and staff,

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To our students, faculty and staff,

COVID-19 continues to spread and affect many parts of the U.S. and the rest of the world. UW-Madison is working to mitigate the effects of the disease on our campus population, in consultation with local, state and federal partners.

The health of our community is our most important priority.

While there are relatively few confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Dane County, the number of cases nationally continues to grow. Our health partners tell us that now is the best time to act in ways that slow the spread.

Let me share several major decisions about the rest of the semester.

We appreciate your flexibility and understanding in advance. At this moment, we can't account for every possibility and scenario, but will continue to communicate about this situation and answer your individual questions as best we are able via chancellor@wisc.edu.

Instruction: To lessen the risk to our community as much as possible, UW-Madison will suspend Spring Semester face-to-face instruction effective Monday, March 23, the date that classes would typically resume after next week's Spring Break.

Alternate delivery of classes will begin on March 23 and continue at least through Friday, April 10. A decision on when and whether in-person instruction will resume will be shared in early April. Students will receive additional information about this transition in the next few days.

Undergraduate residence halls: We are particularly concerned about the safety of students in our residence halls who share bathrooms and eating facilities and live very closely together.

Residents are being asked to take essential belongings, academic materials, laptops and medications with them for Spring Break and not return to residence halls following Spring Break through at least April 10. We hope that students will return to their permanent residence and complete their coursework remotely. A follow-up communication will be sent by University Housing to all affected residents shortly.

We recognize that some students may be unable to return to their permanent residence for various reasons and will need to stay in their residence halls. For instance, some international students will not be able to return home at this time; some students may be unable to access online classes in their home location; some may need to stay in Madison for other reasons.

University Housing will provide additional guidance to students. Residence halls will remain available to these students where necessary, but we expect the majority of dorm residents to return home, leaving the residence halls much emptier and making it easier for remaining students to maintain social distance.

Students who stay in residence halls should be prepared for a reduced campus experience with limited opportunities for interaction and reduced campus services.

Off-campus residents: We expect that most off-campus residents will remain in Madison and continue their studies remotely, although some may choose to remain in their permanent location past the end of spring break.

All students and employees:

Employees:

Campus will remain open and all faculty and staff should continue their regular work schedules unless advised otherwise by their dean, director or supervisor. The university will continue daily operations, with some exceptions around travel and events, noted below. Faculty and instructional staff will receive detailed information from the Provost's Office about the transition to alternative delivery of instruction.

Travel:

All university-sponsored travel is cancelled through April 10, with limited exceptions from academic deans or vice chancellors. People who travel regularly as part of their job (such as Extension workers covering several counties) will typically continue to do so, but should check with their deans or other unit directors.

We strongly advise you to reconsider non-essential personal travel, including travel over Spring Break. Documented cases are growing rapidly both domestically and internationally. You may face a higher risk of infection, significant delays returning, and/or the requirement to self-isolate upon your return, all of which could significantly impact your professional and personal obligations at great individual expense.

All campus community members should be aware that if you travel, you may be required to [self-isolate for 14 days](#) depending on where you're traveling to and from, even if you do not exhibit symptoms.

You can view a list of currently impacted areas that require a self-quarantine here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel--precautions.html>.

Note that this list could change at any time, including while you are on your trip.

Events:

All campus events (including Division of Extension sponsored events outside of Dane County) of more than 50 people are canceled through at least April 10, with limited exceptions to be granted by deans or vice chancellors.

If you develop symptoms:

If you develop symptoms, [stay at home](#) – please do not come to work or class if you are ill. If symptoms like fever, cough, or difficulty breathing are present, you are advised to contact your health care provider for advice.

Employees should not report to work if they are ill and should use sick leave or contact their supervisor or HR rep. Faculty and instructional staff are advised to continue to show flexibility to students around academic assignments, exams or other requirements.

Respect for one another:

We have heard of instances of slurs and profiling directed toward individuals wearing masks or those of Asian descent. Some students have told us that they feel self-conscious coughing in public, they encounter racist comments and jokes, or they experience social distancing on public transportation, in classes, and in groups.

Racist behaviors or stereotyping in or outside of the classroom are not acceptable at UW–Madison. We encourage students who experienced harassment or discrimination to file a [bias incident report](#). Employees may [file a complaint with the Office of Compliance](#). We need everyone's support during this challenging time and to treat each other with respect and kindness.

While students may not feel like COVID-19 will affect them if they are young or healthy, please remember that you are members of a larger community and could carry it to those with compromised immune systems or to older or higher-risk people. There is no vaccine or protection at this time. We ask everyone to consider the safety and health of our entire community.

As you know, this is a constantly evolving situation. Thank you to everyone for their patience and creativity as we deal with these changes over the next month. We'll continue to adapt our plans as information changes, keeping the health and safety of our campus community at the center of our decisions to update campus.

Please visit our website at <http://covid19.wisc.edu>, email us at chancellor@wisc.edu or call Campus and Visitor Relations at (608) 263-2400.

Chancellor Rebecca Blank