



To the University community,

We write with some important updates across a range of issues. As you know, this is an unprecedented and very rapidly changing situation, and all of us are learning more every day. At this point, it seems imperative that we do our very best to slow the progression of this virus in order to “flatten the curve” of those infected and avoid overwhelming our health system, which would ultimately risk our patients, our community, and our Charlottesville neighbors. This requires taking some significant, additional steps at this point.

We realize and regret that these additional steps will cause more disappointment and call for more sacrifice, but we see no other way to do our part to help confront this public health crisis. We must also be mindful of the need for our students, their families, and our faculty and staff to plan, and we need to be mindful of protecting our faculty and staff, who make this place run. For all of those reasons, today we are announcing the following changes, including adjustments to classes, research, and events; guidance for employees; and modifications to services. These changes will go into effect immediately wherever possible, though we recognize that some may take a bit of time to implement fully, as explained below.

ADJUSTMENTS TO CLASSES, RESEARCH, AND EVENTS

Classes will remain online throughout the semester. It is exceedingly unlikely, based on all that we know at this point, that this virus will have abated by the end of April. In light of the need for faculty, staff, and students to make plans, we are making the decision now—rather than waiting until April 5—to not hold any classes on Grounds this semester. For students who do not have the technology needed to complete their classes online, please visit our [technology support fund page](#) and read the instructions and guidelines completely. We are in active discussions about what changes we might make to our normal grading system this semester. We will be back in touch soon once we have made a decision.

Final Exercises will not proceed as planned. In light of the evidence about the likely progression of the virus over the next couple of months, and when it will peak, we have made the difficult decision to cancel Final Exercises as currently planned. We do not make this decision lightly, as we know how disappointing it will be to graduating students and their families. That said, a team is already focused on developing creative alternatives to mark this important occasion, and we will communicate updates as we have them.

All events on Grounds are cancelled, no matter the size, until at least May 15. We had originally cancelled events over 100, but on Sunday the CDC suggested no groups larger than 50, and just recently the White House and the Governor of Virginia suggested gatherings of no more than 10 people. Rather than continue to chase the ever-shrinking size limitations, we want to be clear that all events should be cancelled this semester. These restrictions include events that are not University-sponsored but are planned to occur on Grounds, including conferences, symposia, and social gatherings. This does not preclude small internal meetings, where social distancing should be the touchstone.

Research. Like our teaching mission, we are committed to continuing our research mission while making sure we take steps to keep members of our community safe. We will provide guidance on this by mid-day tomorrow, Wednesday, March 18.

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

All faculty and staff who can work remotely should be told to do so. We are mandating telecommuting for all faculty and staff except those who must report in person to carry out key functions for their units, schools, or UVA Health. The latter includes, among others, faculty who need to come to their classrooms or offices to teach online and UVA Health faculty and staff who need to care for patients and support patient services. The traditional categories of “designated” and “non-designated” are helpful but not entirely relevant here, given that those categories envisioned short delays due to weather problems. School leaders, unit supervisors, and managers have the authority to identify those who must report and those who can work remotely and should share direct guidance with their faculty and staff. We understand that some staff may need to consult with their managers to better understand how to conduct their work under the changed circumstances, and some may need to return to Grounds to collect items necessary to work remotely. We expect these plans to be fully implemented no later than the end of the day, Friday, March 20.

Employee Compensation and Benefits. We are committed to our employees. We are determined to ensure that the modifications to our operations caused by the coronavirus will not impact our existing commitments to compensate and continue existing benefits for UVA employees, whether part-time or full-time. We will therefore honor all existing commitments for the foreseeable future. The length of this crisis is difficult to predict at this point, as are the economic ramifications. There may come a point where we need to reassess in light of the length of time of the crisis or significantly changed circumstances, but our hope and plan is to weather this crisis together.

To be clear, those who must report for work will have to do so. Those who can

work remotely will have to do so. Those who fall into neither category may be asked to perform other functions for their units or schools or to take on tasks elsewhere at the University. Whether or not these employees are able to be re-deployed, we will honor their existing employment commitments for the foreseeable future.

Contract Employees. We have relationships with a wide range of contractors across the University, which present a variety of situations. We are in active conversations with these contractors and hope to be able to provide an update fairly soon.

Student Employees. This change in operations will have an impact on our student employees as well. Students who are teaching assistants or working on research will continue to be paid if they continue their work. Student employees who are able to complete their duties remotely can do so with the approval of their supervisor. Students should submit time sheets and be paid at their normal hourly wage. Students in the Federal Work Study program (FWS) will continue to be paid an average of their current wages bi-weekly through the end of the semester. Students on FWS who will continue to work remotely should submit time sheets and be paid at their normal hourly wage.

For the safety of students and the others with whom they may come into contact, non-FWS student employees who cannot work remotely will not be eligible to continue working while the University's operating schedule is modified due to COVID-19. We understand that this will cause some students financial hardship, and we will do whatever we can to help. If you are in need of financial support, please connect with your supervisor, who has received a list of emergency financial resources available to displaced student employees.

MODIFICATIONS TO SERVICES; CREDITS OR REFUNDS FOR HOUSING AND DINING

On-Grounds Housing Will Be Further Restricted. As our resources and on-site staffing levels diminish due to social distancing directives, and due to increasing emphasis on the importance of social distancing, we will only be able to provide on-Grounds Housing for a very limited number of residents. Only students who have no other option will be permitted to remain on-Grounds. As a reminder, students who are returning solely to collect some of their belongings still have until Wednesday, March 18 at noon to do so. If you are not able to collect your belongings before then, please do not return to Grounds until you hear from us with guidance, which will be coming soon. We will provide details about when and how students will be able to gather all of their belongings.

Any students who stayed in on-Grounds Housing following our initial request to return home must make plans to leave by Friday, March 20, unless they meet

one of the following criteria: 1) international students who are unable to secure travel to return home; 2) persons for whom their on-Grounds residence is their only home (including graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and staff for whom their on-Grounds residence is their permanent address); or 3) students for whom traveling home would present a severe health or safety risk. Housing & Residence Life will contact students who completed the original survey to remain on Grounds, and work with them to transition back home. As before, students currently receiving financial aid with questions related to financial resources for departing Grounds should contact UVA Student Financial Services at sfs@virginia.edu or 434.982.6000.

We are urging undergraduate and graduate students who live off-Grounds to follow these guidelines as well.

Dining. Dining options will be very limited. Effective immediately, Observatory Hill Dining Hall will serve as the only major dining facility in service, apart from those necessary to support UVA Health. Those using O-Hill can obtain their meals there but will not be able to eat inside the facility. Please visit the [University's Dining website](#) for hours of operation and real-time updates. Wherever possible, we encourage students who have kitchens in their place of residence to prepare their own meals.

Credits or Refunds for Housing and Dining. We will provide pro-rated credits to student accounts for on-Grounds Housing and UVA dining contracts. We will send additional information on the mechanics of this process in a later communication, but students will have the ability to either request a refund or allow the credit to remain on their student account to apply to future bills. As long as students remain enrolled through the end of the spring semester, financial aid will not be impacted.

We are making a number of modifications to various services. Dining services, as described above, will be limited to take-out/grab-and-go only. All libraries will be closed, except to faculty and staff who need to use them for teaching online classes or clinical care. Student activity spaces, like those in Newcomb Hall, 1515, and the Student Activities Building, will be closed. All gyms and fitness facilities on Grounds will be closed. University venues such as the museums, the McCormick Observatory, and the Rotunda will be closed to the public. Bus service will be reduced. More details will be forthcoming with respect to all of these topics and will be posted on the University's [coronavirus website](#).

This message covers sweeping changes that would usually be made only after months of consideration and discussion. In the face of this rapidly evolving public health crisis, however, we have been called to make the best decisions we can in a limited amount of time in order to look out for the health and safety of

our community, both at the University and in the surrounding Charlottesville region. Implementing these changes will no doubt be difficult, and we know further questions will arise, but we remain as confident as ever in our community's ability to navigate this unprecedented set of challenges together. In the meantime, our profound thanks to everyone in this community for your dedication, creativity, and compassion.

Sincerely,

Jim Ryan
President

Liz Magill
Provost

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