COVID-19 Update: Message to the UM-Flint Campus Community | March 2020

Dear Campus Community:

We are coming to the end of a very busy week for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Michigan-Flint.

We are successfully continuing operations, while reducing the number of people on campus by allowing remote work whenever possible. We are not currently activating the university’s existing “Emergency Reduction in Operations” or “Reduction in Operations” protocols at this time. If this status changes, it will be communicated immediately.

Against the global backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, our campus community has risen to the occasion. Leaving routines and comfort zones behind, faculty created alternate formats for classes and students came prepared and ready to learn. Many staff are working remotely, continuing the business of the university from their homes, while others who must be on campus are here, contributing mightily to keeping our operation running smoothly.

All of this tremendous effort by students, faculty and staff is being done while each individual manages the chaos in their personal lives with kids home from school, stocking up on necessities, and looking after elderly family members.

None of this is easy.

In spite of the hardship, there is much to take pride in at UM-Flint right now. People across the campus are doing their part to make a tangible difference:

- The Frances Willson Thompson Library staff is digitizing textbooks and other materials to help faculty and students with online learning.
- The Department of Public Safety has teamed up with Urban Safety Corp to collect books and essentials for community members in need.
- Assistant Professor Michelle Sahli and the Public Health Student Organization are collecting and distributing soap to people in need through the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and Flint Area Schools.
- Faculty from the UM-Flint Colleges and Schools are creating online communities with students for social engagement and support.
- Professor Robert Buckingham from the College of Health Sciences is serving on the ASPHER-WHO COVID-19 Task Force. The task force is working to ensure data and correct information is shared between countries and to help the public health officials as well as government agencies and leaders make the correct decisions for each specific population.
I applaud these efforts, as well as those of people who are doing all they can to help students and colleagues work through issues during this unprecedented time.

Now, more than ever, we must remain committed to our university’s mission. The pursuit of knowledge is always a worthy endeavor, but especially during the hard times. Education is the tool we use to weather this storm and the one we will use to have a robust recovery. Every student who is studying, every faculty member who is teaching, and every staff member who works on campus and off, is contributing value at a time when we need it most. It may seem like a small gesture, but the smallest actions contribute to solving the biggest problems.

Thank you for all you are doing to help students, colleagues and the community as we move forward together.

Best wishes for good health,

Deba Dutta, Ph.D.
Chancellor