Important updates on finals, commencements, flexible work arrangements and additional COVID-19 Updates | March 2020

Dear Campus Community:

Please read thoroughly the message below from President Mark Schlissel. I have highlighted below the items that are most relevant for UM-Flint.

Work remotely

• Although UM-Flint will remain fully operational and is not moving to “reduction in operations” protocols, beginning Monday, March 16, our campus will implement a remote working plan. All units have prepared a schedule and process for remote work and will make opportunities to work remotely available to staff members. The remote work plan will remain in effect until further notice but updates or changes will be communicated by supervisors.

Temporary emergency paid time off policy for COVID-19 pandemic

• Effective immediately, full-time employees are eligible for up to 80 hours of paid time off to be used in the case of quarantine, isolation or family care needs related to COVID-19 exposure or illness. This temporary policy applies to all faculty and staff. Part-time and temporary employees will be eligible for a prorated amount of time. This policy will remain in effect until further notice and updates or changes will be communicated by supervisors.

We must all do our part to prevent the spread of the coronavirus by washing hands frequently and following other good hygiene practices. In addition, staying home when you are ill, avoiding others who are sick, and seeking medical attention are important.

Thank you.

Deba Dutta, Ph.D.
Chancellor
To All Members of the U-M Community:

I am writing to share important University of Michigan updates related to the COVID-19 virus. I recognize the difficulties the outbreak has created for everyone, and appreciate the engagement and support we have seen within our community in recent weeks.

Today, I am announcing a set of changes to accomplish two important goals:
- Further protect health and safety by minimizing the potential spread of the disease within our community and in the broader society.
- Keep all university operations up and running.

More details are included below, and these actions apply to all three of our campuses:
- All final exams will take place remotely in alternative formats.
- All managers are encouraged to provide opportunities for employees to work remotely when possible, while keeping their units open for business.
- Students who can do so are encouraged to move home as soon as possible.
- All U-M commencement ceremonies are canceled. We will look at ways to celebrate 2020 graduates in the future.
- Everyone is encouraged to avoid gathering socially in large groups.
- We have launched a one-time paid time-off bank for employees during COVID-19 pandemic.

**All final exams will take place remotely in alternative formats**

This essentially extends our previous action to prevent all classes from meeting in person. Faculty and instructors will communicate how this will be handled as soon as possible.

As a reminder, classes remain canceled today but will resume Monday, March 16, delivered remotely in alternative formats. The Ann Arbor Provost’s Office has additional information and resources on remote instruction on our [Keep Teaching](#) at U-M page.

Students will not be required to come to our campuses for instruction or exams for the remainder of this semester.

**Encourage opportunities for employees to work remotely**

I ask all managers to provide opportunities for employees to work remotely when possible while keeping their units open for business. This includes student employees. I recognize that not all work can be performed remotely, so I encourage flexibility and creativity. Michigan Medicine faculty and staff should refer to the telecommuting policy currently in place.

U-M is taking this action to reduce the density of people in physical spaces. This aligns with the general public health principles to diminish disease transmission and protect everyone in our communities, particularly the most vulnerable, as recommended by the [Centers for](#)
Employees who are sick need to stay home from work. All U-M employees who may be at greater risk should contact human resources in their school, college or unit or Staff Human Resources Services for assistance.

Please note that we are not currently moving to our “reduction in operations” protocols, and that we recognize that there’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all plan that covers every U-M unit, given the size and complexity of our enterprise. This action to encourage working remotely will remain in effect until further notice, and we recognize there are additional challenges for many faculty and staff presented by the closure of K-12 schools.

The university’s Work-Life Resource Center has information to support flexible work options, and the Remote Resource Guide we created contains technology resources to assist employees who are able to work remotely. The Ann Arbor Provost’s Office has additional information on remote instruction on our Keep Teaching at U-M page. Our Office of Research also has created guidance so faculty and staff can best manage their ongoing research and scholarship activities.

To all employees, I very much appreciate your commitment to our university, students, parents, visitors and patients during the COVID-19 outbreak. The accounts of your dedication that I have heard are truly impressive, including supporting students, caring for patients, cleaning our buses and facilities, innovating to support our mission, or reaching out to support colleagues during a difficult time.

We are an excellent university because of the people who work here.

**Students who can do so are encouraged to move home as soon as possible.**

The university encourages students to go home to their permanent residences if possible. At the same time, we are taking additional precautions across the university to protect health and safety for everyone who remains on our campuses, including those who may not be able to leave. These include restricting traffic flows, stepping up cleaning, and canceling events to prevent interactions in large groups.

U-M housing and dining operations, the University Health Service, and libraries will remain open to serve students who stay. We continue to urge everyone to practice social distancing of 5 to 6 feet when you are engaging with others.

We’ve received numerous questions regarding pro-rating housing, dining, and other various school/college fees and we are examining this issue. We also ask that as students confirm your plans, please complete the survey here to indicate if you intend to leave campus or to remain.
Going home when possible will help to reduce the density of people in physical spaces. We recognize this may bring additional people to campus in the short term, but the reduction in density it will create over the next few weeks will help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It further follows general public health principles recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

**All U-M commencement ceremonies are canceled**

We are canceling all Spring 2020 commencement activities across our three campuses. This includes both the large campuswide ceremonies and individual school, college and group recognition ceremonies. We know that this is very disappointing to many, and we are looking at ways to celebrate 2020 graduates in the future.

**Avoid gathering socially in large groups**

We need your help here, too. Gathering in large groups is not recommended – and this includes gathering socially. We strongly encourage you to limit interactions in groups this weekend and in celebrating St. Patrick’s Day. Reducing the density of people in physical spaces will help to prevent the spread of disease not just within our community but for society at large.

Even in small groups, we strongly recommend practicing social distancing.

These actions are based on general public health principles recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. They are designed to protect everyone in our communities, particularly those at higher risk from COVID-19.

**One-time paid time off bank for employees during COVID-19 pandemic**

To further minimize the impact of COVID-19, the university has established a one-time paid time off bank related to the pandemic.

Effective immediately, employees are eligible for up to 80 hours of paid time off to be used in the case of quarantine, isolation or family care needs related to COVID-19 exposure, illness or other related scenario or a temporary lack of work. This is a one-time bank of paid time off for use during the current pandemic.

This one-time bank applies to faculty and staff on all campuses and in Michigan Medicine. Part-time and temporary employees, including student temporary staff, will be eligible for a prorated amount of time.

More details about the policy and how to access this bank of time will soon be available on the [University Human Resources website](#) and from your appropriate human resources office.
Additional updates

- The Washtenaw County Public Health Department has confirmed to the University of Michigan that a member of our community has tested positive for COVID-19. The individual who tested positive is self-isolating in Ann Arbor.
- The university has activated its emergency call center to assist those with COVID-19 questions specifically related to U-M responses. It will be available Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at (877) 763-3040.
- The National Institutes of Health has made two announcements that may assist our research programs. The first allows institutions to apply for immediate financial support to assist with research operations during COVID-19. The second is NIH’s disaster policy, which allows latitude in items such as application deadlines, quarterly updates, adaptations in clinical trial protocols and staffing changes. We will post further details on the UMOR COVID-19 site.
- UMOR is announcing new restrictions for human subjects research in an effort to minimize the risk of contracting or spreading the virus, and also to preserve personal protective equipment for clinical care. Learn more at research.umich.edu/covid-19.

There are everyday actions we can all take to help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Consider alternatives to shaking hands.
- Unless you are sick with cough, sneezing and fever, it is not advised to wear a mask.

Our health professionals are monitoring the spread of the virus and working closely with public health officials at the federal, state and local levels to protect health and safety. We will continue to post the latest information to our COVID-19 information page and I and other leaders will provide updates going forward.

I again want to thank all of you for your diligence during these recent weeks. The rapidly changing situation due to the COVID-19 virus has created challenges across the breadth of our university, and I know that it has affected the work and personal lives of our students, faculty and staff.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.
President