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## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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March 13, 2020

Dear UNE Community,

As you know, the University's coronavirus response team continues to meet daily to discuss the ongoing pandemic and to consider and respond to all the ramifications that the growing outbreak has on our community. Based on the best evidence available, we can expect that the virus will continue to pose a major challenge for the foreseeable future. I would like to inform you of the most recent decisions we have made.

But before I do, let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the way our Nor'easter community has come together to support our students — and one another — during these challenging times. The situation is unfolding quickly and has now reached a point in which we have no choice but to make significant changes to our normal operations for the coming weeks. These will present hardships for all of us and will be especially disruptive to our students. I am profoundly sorry that we have to take these steps, but extraordinary times call for extraordinary efforts to keep our community safe and well.

### **UNDERGRADUATE RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS**

Effective after spring break, instruction in all undergraduate programs, except for advanced Dental Hygiene and advanced Nursing, will move to an online format. Our goal is to allow students to complete their coursework for the spring term remotely and without interruption. Faculty members will continue to teach their courses according to the current schedule but will do so online.

Undergraduate residential students, other than advanced Dental Hygiene and advanced Nursing students, will be asked to remove all belongings from the residential halls. This may be completed any time during spring break or during the following week, through Sunday, March 29, at 8 p.m.

We will establish an appeals process for those students who are unable to leave campus due to their homes being in countries of increased exposure to the coronavirus or who face other extenuating circumstances. In order to file an appeal, or if you anticipate a problem meeting the move-out deadline, please complete the form at this site: <https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/a3Wk4bdc91cn8> and a member of the Housing team will be in touch.

For the safety of those undergraduate residential students who are granted special permission through the appeals process to stay on campus, we will incorporate appropriate measures around social distancing and enhanced personal hygiene on campus.

Also, to prepare for the possibility that there may be students on campus who become infected and will need treatment, Frederick Hall is vacated and is reserved for the isolation and treatment of potential COVID-19 patients. In addition, we have created a new space for Health Services in close proximity to the residence halls, which will allow students to be transported safely to avoid contamination across campus.

Student Accounts will reimburse senior residential students for a prorated amount of their room and board fees. All other undergraduate residential students will see a credit in their account for next semester. Further information will be made available when finalized.

## **GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS AND SENIOR DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENTS**

For Graduate and Professional Students as well as advanced Dental Hygiene and advanced Nursing students, the University will move instruction online to the fullest extent possible. For those components that require in-person attendance on campus, modifications will be made to include the principles of social distancing and other safety measures. To be clear, graduate and professional students as well as advanced Dental Hygiene and advanced Nursing students are expected to return to the area after spring break to participate in essential clinical and experiential learning sessions. Further information about modifications of schedules will be made available by your program director, who will be in touch with you soon to provide additional guidance.

## **STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD**

Given the volatile nature of the outbreak and the unpredictable consequences resulting from it, we have made the very difficult decision, as have many universities across the nation, to exercise an abundance of caution and recall our students studying abroad in Europe. This is a tremendous disappointment to all of us, and I am especially dismayed by the disruption it will have on the impacted students.

We have also reached out to all of our students currently on UNE's Morocco Campus and have offered to arrange their travel back to the United States should they wish to return home. At this time, students in Morocco are not being recalled. These students have been advised not to travel.

## **STUDENT ATHLETES**

This morning, the Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC), of which we are a member, announced that it is suspending all spring competition. Likewise, UNE has suspended all athletic activities until further notice.

## **FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

The University remains open, as the work of educating our students (albeit in a modified format) and of serving those who remain on campus will continue without interruption. On the Biddeford campus, the Alfond Forum and Ketchum Library will remain open for use, and the Ripich Commons will continue to serve meals. In Portland, the Abplanalp Library and Nor'easter Café will likewise remain open. Members of the faculty and professional staff are expected to work on campus as usual while following the health protocols the University has already put in place, based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

guidelines. If you have a cold or flu-like systems, please stay home, and contact your health care provider promptly. Please contact Human Resource at [HR-COVID19Questions@une.edu](mailto:HR-COVID19Questions@une.edu) if you are in a high-risk classification and request a modification to your work environment.

## TRAVEL

To reiterate the previously announced policies on University-sponsored travel, both international and non-essential domestic travel are suspended until further notice. With concern growing among the country's top epidemiologists about the spread rate and severity of the virus, we must avoid unnecessary travel in the interest of both our community and the public at large.

## ADMISSIONS

We will be postponing our upcoming Accepted Student Day events scheduled for March 28 and April 4 and will be enhancing our virtual online events. We will also extend our deposit deadline for applicants to our undergraduate programs to June 1. We will continue offering on-campus tours, for which we will incorporate appropriate social distancing practices.

## COMMENCEMENT AND OTHER PROGRAMS

We are currently establishing guidelines around what programs will need to be suspended as well as which events must be cancelled. We very much hope to hold Commencement ceremonies as scheduled, but it is too early to know for certain if we will be able to do so. Please refer to our Emergency Preparedness and Response page for updates.

## PERSPECTIVE

While these outcomes are very disappointing and frustrating for all of us, please know that these decisions have not been made lightly and are unavoidable in the face of an unprecedented global crisis. I, along with my entire leadership team, am saddened by the upheaval caused by this situation. I will personally miss the many personal connections with our students over the coming weeks.

I know that our Nor'easter community will weather this storm together, and will emerge even stronger. A guiding theme of our strategic plan is the "...the profound respect and concern that the UNE community holds for the health of our World – its people, its communities, and its physical environment." Together, we will now live up to this commitment. Thank you for your understanding, flexibility, patience, and hard work as we work through these extraordinary circumstances.

I wish you all good health.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert  
*President*