

COVID-19 Update

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To: All Faculty and Staff [REDACTED]

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you and your family are well and enjoying the extended Spring Break as much as possible under these trying circumstances. The University continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on our area. We are continuously working on plans and modifications necessary to maintain basic operations, with an abundance of caution taken to ensure the health and safety of the UWA community, which of course is our primary goal. I am grateful for the progress our campus has made thus far in response to the coronavirus, and I am deeply appreciative of the dedication, flexibility, and cooperation shown by our faculty and staff in this truly collaborative effort. One thing is for sure—we are all experiencing unprecedented challenges, but by working together, I am increasingly confident in our ability to successfully meet these challenges.

Our transition to all online instruction, which began March 16 and will have been completed by April 6, is particularly commendable. Concerted efforts toward this are, and will continue to be, essential in continuing to provide a quality educational experience for our students. As you know, there are many, many moving parts within our campus, and we are carefully reviewing each piece to develop plans for the coming weeks and perhaps longer (this dependent, of course, on changes prompted by law, edict, regulations, and more).

Operational plans are being reviewed to promote a safe and functional work schedule for all faculty and staff going forward. This may entail telework (or working remotely from home, as most faculty will be doing) for team members who are able, or perhaps alternative work schedules that comply with recommended social distancing guidelines. These decisions will be made with significant input from department heads and supervisors, driven by the goal of maintaining operations while keeping employees as safe as possible under the circumstances.

Understandably, work loads may vary during this time, with some positions bearing a greater work load while others experience a reduction in capacity. In such cases, temporary re-assignment may be necessary to establish a more balanced and fair distribution of work, thus striving for continued employment for all – a goal of paramount importance. As many individuals are rightly concerned about the future of their jobs, or where their next paycheck may come from, as long as we remain focused on working together collaboratively and supporting each other and our students, we can continue effective operations, which should allay any employment concerns that may exist.

Department heads and supervisors should carefully review their staff operations with their leaders to determine the best temporary plan, and consult with Robert Upchurch, director of human resources, should they need assistance in planning. An update on schedules and operational plans will be communicated to you as soon as possible via email.

Again, we will continue to provide basic services to the fullest extent possible as the semester progresses. The Caf remains open on a limited basis, having adjusted hours of operation and offering take-out meals only, with no consumption allowed in the dining room, as prescribed by the State of Alabama.

As you will recall from a previous campus notice, staff are working to disinfect common areas throughout campus while we are on break, and housekeeping efforts have been focused on all the appropriate areas for maintaining the cleanest, safest environment possible.

I sincerely thank you for your continued understanding, cooperation, and patience. We are all in this together—at UWA, with fellow universities, as a state, nation, and indeed the world. Together, we will successfully get through this.

Ken



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