

SPECIAL BULLETIN TO THE FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY  
March 17, 2020

---

**Re: SPECIAL BULLETIN: Extending Online Classes Through the End of the Semester**

Dear Franciscan University Community:

Peace.

Last week, I shared with you that, on March 23, our University community would move to online and other alternative learning at least through April 3 in response to the coronavirus.

Every day has brought news of new instructions and restrictions from state and federal governments, including lockdowns in some areas, the closing of restaurants, and avoiding groups of more than 10 people. In addition, the bishops of Ohio have cancelled all public Masses and liturgies through Easter. In light of these increased restrictions and our commitment to protecting our community and to ensuring the continuity of our academic programs, we have made the decision to continue online classes through the end of the semester and to close our student housing for the spring semester.

I want to honor and thank the faculty, staff, students, and parents of Franciscan University for your patience and good will as we have made these difficult decisions. As disruptive as this is for all of us, our Franciscan University community must play our role in our nation's concerted public health response while continuing to pray for healing for those who are ill, protection for the most vulnerable among us, and that God moves sovereignly to defeat this virus.

Here are the latest updates about our University response to the coronavirus:

**We are suspending all in-person (face-to-face) classes through the end of the spring 2020 semester. All instruction and final exams will be conducted online and through other alternative learning options.**

All classes converted to the online format will begin no later than March 23, 2020. Students will hear directly from their respective deans and/or faculty instructors regarding specific instructions and class start dates. Students with questions regarding internships/clinicals should contact their faculty instructors. Accordingly, please check your University email and Blackboard frequently for assignments and future updates.

Courses that were originally delivered online will continue as originally scheduled.

**Residence halls and other University student housing will not re-open for the spring semester;** students who were not already granted an exception to stay in

University housing following spring break are not permitted to check back in to the residence halls this semester. Exceptions will be considered for international students, for students who are engaged in academic clinicals/internships, and in cases of extreme hardship; a separate communication will be sent today to students who were previously granted an exception to remain in student housing. For students who are approved to remain in University housing, limited take-out dining service will be maintained.

**Resident students are strongly discouraged from returning to campus to pick up their belongings and check out of their University housing before March 27 at the earliest.** Students in exceptional hardship situations who need to return to pick up their belongings prior to March 27 should contact their Residence Director via email to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students returning to pick up their belongings will generally not be permitted to stay overnight in the residence halls. The University is not able to pack up student belongings. At this time, the University has not set an end date by which students must return to pick up their belongings; this date depends on the situation with the coronavirus and will be determined and communicated in the future.

**We will provide students and parents with information regarding refunds for the cancelled portion of the room and board on Friday, March 20.**

**We have not yet made a decision regarding our Commencement ceremonies scheduled for May 8-9, 2020.** We will continue to evaluate the situation and keep you informed of any changes. We anticipate a decision by April 6 on whether we will proceed with Commencement ceremonies as scheduled.

For more information on Franciscan University's response to the coronavirus, please visit our [coronavirus resource page](#).

As I've said before, God remains in control in the midst of this pandemic. He is our loving and merciful Father and is ever present to us. Let's keep each other in prayer and continue to pray for miracles of healing, deliverance, and love and care for our neighbors.

May God bless you!  
Father Dave Pivonka, TOR  
President  
Franciscan University of Steubenville