

BULLETIN TO CAMPUS UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY
03/23/2020

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Yesterday, the Ohio Department of Health issued a stay-at-home order. The order identified certain essential businesses and operations, including universities, which may continue to operate within certain parameters. The order permits universities to facilitate online learning, carry out critical research, and continue essential operations, provided that social distancing of six feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, our operations will continue as outlined in last Thursday's memo.

While we are unaware of how the stay-at-home order will be enforced, we want to provide the essential employees with the attached letter, which may be of assistance if you are questioned by authorities.

I also want to take this opportunity to address some concerns raised by a few people about last Thursday's memo. Most of the anxiety related to the statement regarding the University's intention to honor all existing compensation and benefit commitments through April 3, 2020. Some asked whether this implies that the University will stop paying faculty and staff or stop providing benefits beyond that date. Others questioned whether the University plans to implement major reductions in staffing as of that date. I wholeheartedly apologize for any anxiety resulting from our memo.

The University is still operating, and the vast majority of employees remain and will remain actively engaged, either remotely when feasible or on campus when necessary. We have no plan in place to stop paying employees, to make cuts to compensation and benefits, or to engage in significant layoffs over the short-term. Our goal in mentioning a specific date was to establish an initial timeframe before the commitment could be reviewed and potentially extended.

I wish I could tell you that nothing will change in benefits, compensation, or staffing levels no matter how long the pandemic goes on—and that is my heartfelt prayer and hope—but I simply don't know what the future holds. In full transparency, if the pandemic forces us to modify our operations longer-term, Franciscan, like many universities and businesses across the country, will need to make some hard choices.

No one knows what things will look like in a week, two weeks, or a month. But we will continue to monitor day by day and do our best to make decisions with as much information and collaboration as possible. Again, our hope and goal is to maintain compensation, benefits, and staffing at their current levels throughout this crisis if at all possible, and we will provide an update to you by April 3.

I am fully aware that the uncertainty of the coming days and weeks can be a source of anxiety. I know, too, that God brings order out of chaos, hope from frustration, and peace in the midst of anxiety.

God is faithful. We will continue to seek him, do our best at being faithful, and trust in his care and concern for us.

Thank you so much for all you are doing. Know of my prayers and the prayers of all the friars.

God Bless,
Father Dave, TOR