

SPECIAL BULLETIN TO CAMPUS COMMUNITY

MARCH 11, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Coronavirus Update: In-Person Classes Suspended and New Guidelines for the Franciscan University Community

Dear Franciscan University Community,

Peace and blessing.

Over the last many days and weeks, the University leadership team has participated in countless meetings regarding the coronavirus. We have had Masses said, spent time in prayer, and had meeting after meeting. We find ourselves in a situation that we have never encountered before. We are confident that God is present in all of this and are doing our best to navigate this storm.

Recently, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has made persuasive recommendations to colleges and universities in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus in the State of Ohio, which includes suspending in-person (face-to-face) classes until further notice. Franciscan University has determined that it is most prudent to follow these recommendations based on our desire to protect the health and safety of our community.

Correspondingly, the University is implementing the following measures in response to COVID-19:

- We are suspending all in-person (face-to-face) classes, at least through Friday, April 3, 2020, and moving all instruction to online and 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. 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.
- We will actively review the situation to determine when in-person classes may resume.
- Our campuses in Steubenville and Gaming will remain open and operational at this time with the possibility of limited or reduced services depending upon current circumstances.

- Residence halls will remain open, as will food service. Resident students have the option to stay in the residence halls during this transitional time. The Residence Life Department will send a separate communication tomorrow to resident students with more information.
- Faculty will receive information from the Vice President of Academic Affairs on the next steps related to moving instruction online or employing other alternative learning options.
- The University's prohibition of University-related travel to [highly impacted areas](#) remains in effect. All other non-essential travel is discouraged. If you must travel, domestically or internationally, we ask that you [register your travel](#) so we may monitor our travel footprint and share critical information with you upon your return.
- Travel for students studying in Gaming is restricted to Austria until further notice.
- Employees who are at [increased risk for coronavirus complications](#), or who have family members in their household with increased risk, may receive direction from their physician to avoid the workplace for a specified duration. The University will honor such medical directives and will work with affected employees to facilitate remote work arrangements or designated sick leave.
- Effective immediately and until further notice, all University-sponsored events, including events sponsored by student organizations, will be adjusted, postponed, or cancelled as appropriate.
- We currently plan to hold Commencement ceremonies on May 8-9, 2020, but we will continue to evaluate that decision and keep you informed of any changes.
- For more information on Franciscan University's response to the coronavirus, please visit our [coronavirus resource page](#).

Franciscan University takes great pride in our unique living and learning environment, which provides invaluable relationships, fellowship, and support for one another. Although this is one of our greatest strengths, we also recognize that these are extraordinary times that require significant measures to deal with a global health pandemic that affects all of us.

We have never faced a situation like this, and we will do our best to manage it well and move forward. In the coming days, we will be confronted with questions that we have not considered and may not immediately have answers for. I ask for your patience and good will as we decide the best path forward.

For the foreseeable future, a Franciscan friar will offer Mass every day for this situation asking the Lord's blessing, wisdom, protection, and healing.

Let's pray for each other and for our world—for God's powerful healing love and protection for all and for a swift end to this pandemic. And let's encourage one another to remain steadfast in faith in Jesus Christ, our rock and our refuge in times of trouble. My prayer for you comes from Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Amen? Amen.

God bless,
Father Dave Pivonka, TOR
President