



March 17, 2020

Dear Presidents:

Thank you for the extraordinary efforts you and your teams are undertaking to ensure the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and campus communities. I have been impressed and gratified by the commitment and action I have witnessed everyday across The University of Texas System.

The situation nationally and in Texas regarding the spread and impact of COVID-19 is changing rapidly, and we all recognize the need to take unprecedented steps to protect the health of our campus communities as well as do our part to limit the spread of infection more generally. This includes “social distancing” strategies to avoid gatherings, avoiding contact with individuals from affected areas, limiting travel, and more. Such steps are impossible to accomplish under business as usual practices on campuses where sitting together in classes and auditoriums, working together in libraries, living and eating in close proximity in residence and dining halls, and attending campus events are the norm.

Accordingly, after the very thoughtful input and advice from you and in consultation with the leadership of the Board of Regents, we are announcing the following extraordinary measures to accomplish our highest priorities—the health and safety of students and other members of our campus communities and the continued education of our students. Each of your institutions is unique, and you will have the latitude necessary and appropriate to accomplish these necessary steps while ensuring that your students continue their education—and for those on track for graduation, finish their requirements for degrees—while receiving the support they require.

1. Starting immediately, all instruction will be provided online. Students away for spring break will be encouraged to stay or return home to complete their course work remotely, and those currently on campus will be encouraged to return to their homes to do the same. There will be no on-campus classes or other academic gatherings. Unique research activities will be managed at the institutional level.
2. Living in campus residence halls and participating in campus dining programs will be limited to students who do not have a suitable alternative. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis, to serve students who require this accommodation, while observing social distancing practices.

Letter to Academic Presidents

March 17, 2020

Page 2

3. In light of the Centers for Disease Control's guidance prohibiting gatherings, all spring commencement ceremonies shall be postponed. Graduating students will receive their degrees as scheduled, but the ceremonies we all look forward to will be held at a later date, most likely in the fall.
4. Students who have paid for residence halls, dining plans, and other specific, related campus services they cannot use will be reimbursed or credited for unused portions, and we will work with you on system-wide guidelines for these plans.
5. We are establishing a system-wide emergency fund to be made available to institutions to address specific student needs.

No one recognizes better than you the disappointment these actions will bring and the hard work that will be required to implement them. Under the circumstances, though, our commitment to the health and safety of students and their families, our institutions, and our larger communities requires no less.

Thank you again to you and your faculty and staff for your good work, and we are grateful to our students and their families for understanding and working with us during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



James B. Milliken  
Chancellor