

MB MARY BALDWIN UNIVERSITY

Dear MBU Students:

I write today with a timely and important update on the rapidly evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and how Mary Baldwin University is responding. We do not have any confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus, but as reports of diagnoses increase in Virginia, university leadership has decided to **suspend in-seat classes beginning at 5 p.m. Friday, March 13, and resume via online instruction at 8 a.m. Wednesday, March 18.** Online instruction will continue online for the remainder of the spring semester, ending April 20. We also are suspending regular dining and residence services effective at 5 p.m. Monday, March 16, and strongly encourage students to return home.

For most of our students, the safest place for you to be during this outbreak is at home. However, if Mary Baldwin is the safest place for you to continue your studies online, you should stay here and MBU will provide housing and limited dining services. Please reach out to the Office of Student Engagement at studentsengage@marybaldwin.edu to make accommodations. If you have special concerns about transportation home, internet access at home, or otherwise, again, please reach out to Student Engagement for support.

The change in operating status includes all campus events, including public lectures, prospective visit days, and athletics competitions. We will closely monitor and assess the situation to determine whether to resume in-seat classes for May Term, campus life, and on-campus events such as Capstone and Commencement. We expect to communicate this decision as soon as we are able to in April.

For now, residential students may leave the majority of your belongings in your residence hall, but please be sure to take any valuables with you. If the university does not return to normal operations through the end of the academic year, arrangements will be made for belongings to be picked up at a later date.

MBU's Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences and the Shakespeare and Performance graduate program will not move to online instruction. Program leadership will follow up with faculty to discuss special health and safety accommodations for health sciences students and

personnel at the college's branch campus in Fishersville and at the Shakespeare and Performance space at the Wharf.

MBU-sponsored travel and study abroad programs for the remainder of the school year are also canceled. This includes the art department trip to New York and the May term trip to Cyprus. MBU is not an organizer of the Summer at Oxford and Autism on the Seas programs, so they are not in our purview to cancel, however we strongly urge students to reconsider their participation.

Although we do not have any confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus, we are heeding the caution of public health experts about its highly contagious nature, how it is transmitted, and the importance of social distancing to stop or slow down the spread of the virus. Our goal is simple: decrease the number of situations that require community members to gather in large groups and to minimize the time spent in close proximity with each other. From this point forward, we strongly encourage anyone remaining on campus to:

- Keep at least six feet between yourself and another person in all public places
- Avoid close contact, including handshakes and hugging
- Limit in-person meetings

As your academic work continues remotely this semester, I encourage you to practice good time management, and to communicate your specific needs with your professors and academic advisors. You should expect to hear from your professors on the morning of Wednesday, March 18 with specific information about your online courses.

I do not take this decision lightly and have made it with the health and safety of the entire MBU family in mind, which includes your own loved ones. I understand the impact that this will have on each of you, and I want to pledge the full support of the MBU administration, faculty, and staff. No student's path to a degree will be denied or delayed because of this decision.

I also understand and appreciate that you will have many questions, and we are working to have answers for you in a timely fashion. We will continue to reach out with information as it is available. Please continue to watch your email or visit marybaldwin.edu/covid19 for answers to frequently asked questions and updates from the university.

Sincerely,

President Pamela R. Fox