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## Fwd: Brown transition to remote learning and limited on-campus housing

1 message

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To: Pb919@georgetown.edu

Sat, Apr 4, 2020 at 7:38 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **President Christina H. Paxson** <president@brown.edu>  
Date: Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 9:35 AM  
Subject: Brown transition to remote learning and limited on-campus housing  
To: <community.announce.allbrown@lists.brown.edu>, <community.parents.undergrad.all@lists.brown.edu>



BROWN

Dear Members of the Brown Community,

As you are aware, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has continued to spread across the country and the world. Although there is still great uncertainty about the ultimate extent and severity of the pandemic, we must be prepared for a situation in which the virus becomes very widespread in the United States, including Rhode Island.

I am writing to announce the steps we will take to keep our community safe while making it possible for students to complete the semester. But first, I want to explain why we are taking these actions.

Our first priority is to protect the health of our students and employees. Fortunately, the COVID-19 mortality rate for young adults appears to be quite low. However, there are Brown students and employees who, due to age or underlying health conditions, may be at significant risk if they contract the virus. We must take steps to protect them, as well as other vulnerable members of the local community who interact with Brown students on a regular basis.

A major concern is that Brown simply does not have the facilities or personnel needed to manage the large-scale quarantine or isolation of students that would be necessary if the virus begins to spread through our residential student community. The only way to limit this risk is to dramatically reduce the number of students residing at Brown.

For these reasons, **we have made the very difficult decision to move academic instruction for all undergraduate and graduate students to remote learning effective Monday, March 30.**

Undergraduate students who live in on-campus residences or Brown-owned properties must vacate their residences as soon as possible and no later than **Sunday, March 22**, and complete the semester from their homes or at an alternate location away from campus. Exceptions will be made for undergraduate students whose circumstances would prevent them from leaving campus due to international travel restrictions or other extraordinary circumstances.

Classes will be cancelled during the week of **March 16** so that faculty have time to prepare to transition courses to remote learning, and students have time to pack and arrange for travel. Reading week will be devoted to making up the missed week of classes, and faculty can plan to teach during that period. These changes do not apply to most students in the Warren Alpert Medical School, which will communicate any changes or restrictions directly to medical students.

It's important to note that Brown University will remain open, and academic and administrative offices will continue to operate. Unless they are ill or caring for family members, employees will continue their work. The various offices that

support students are making plans to offer their services remotely.

A concise list of cancellations and restrictions follows this letter, and a number of communications will be shared with specific groups of Brown community members later today. You'll see that the University has implemented additional restrictions for events and visitors to campus as we continue to consider health and safety in all that we do.

I am sorry to have to share such heartbreaking news. The best part of Brown is the interactions we have with each other, in classrooms, dormitories and around campus. I especially feel for our seniors whose "senior spring" is being severely disrupted. My hope is that by May, the virus will have abated and we will be able to welcome our seniors and their families back to campus for Commencement and Reunion Weekend. We will keep everyone informed about plans for Commencement and Reunion Weekend in the weeks to come, as we learn more about the spread of the virus.

I'm grateful to everyone on campus working to respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and to the entire Brown University community for your understanding, resilience and commitment to taking care of each other.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson  
President

## **OPERATIONAL UPDATES, CLOSURES AND CANCELLATIONS**

**NOTE:** Please see Brown University's [COVID-19 website](#) for updates and further details related to this announcement to be developed over the course of the next few days.

### **CHANGES IN CLASS SCHEDULE**

- Undergraduate and graduate classes are cancelled for the week of March 16.
- Undergraduate and graduate classes will resume on Monday, March 30, taught via remote learning.
- Medical school students will hear directly about any class changes from their deans.
- Faculty are encouraged to teach through reading week to make up classes missed during the week of March 16.

### **EVENTS**

As an update to previous guidance shared on events and gatherings, effective immediately, all student-organized events, both on campus and beyond, must be cancelled, regardless of the number of attendees. Faculty and staff are encouraged to postpone, cancel or offer virtually any event or gathering considered non-essential. For questions, please email [events covid@brown.edu](mailto:events covid@brown.edu).

In addition, in alignment with a decision [announced by the Ivy League](#) on March 11, all Brown spring athletics competitions and practices will be cancelled.

All non-essential visitors are discouraged from coming to campus through April 13, at which point this guidance will be re-evaluated. Brown community members should contact [travel covid@brown.edu](mailto:travel covid@brown.edu) with questions.

### **STUDENTS**

We know there may be a temptation to use this time to gather with friends, but we are calling on students to consider the health of themselves and others, avoid gatherings and recognize the importance of social distancing to limit the spread of infection.

#### **For undergraduates moving out of residence halls or Brown-owned properties:**

Undergraduate students residing in on-campus housing or in Brown-owned properties will receive an email later this morning from [reslife@brown.edu](mailto:reslife@brown.edu). That message will provide students with information about moving out of their residence and registering their date of departure. This message will also include information for students whose circumstances would prevent them from leaving campus (e.g., international travel restrictions and other extraordinary circumstances).

- Unless students are provided with an exception, students must move out of their residence by 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 22, and students are strongly encouraged to leave earlier if at all possible.
- Exceptions will be considered for the following circumstances:
  - International students with concerns about being able to return to Brown due to visa issues
  - International students with concerns about difficulty returning to their home country due to the prevalence of COVID-19
  - Students who do not have an alternate place to go

- Students for whom departing campus would create a severe financial hardship
- Students who want to petition for one of the above exceptions must do as soon as possible and no later than Wednesday, March 18, via the online form in the email from [reslife@brown.edu](mailto:reslife@brown.edu).
- Decisions on exceptions will be made on a rolling basis starting Monday, March 16.
- Students whose petitions are approved are required to stay on campus at Brown during Spring Break.
- Students who will be remaining on campus after March 22 should fully pack their belongings for reassignment to a new residence. Moving assistance will be provided.
- Students will receive a credit on their student accounts for the unused portion of their room and board. The credit will be prorated based on each family's contribution to the cost of attendance. Graduating seniors will receive a prorated refund for the unused portion of their room and board.
- Brown's Office of International Programs has been in contact with all undergraduates enrolled in study abroad programs to provide updated guidance.

### For undergraduates living off campus

While off-campus students in properties not owned by Brown may remain in their residences, our strong preference is for students to depart because Brown will have limited capacity to support off-campus students. Any off-campus students who need to self-isolate will need to do so in their own residences.

### Dining

Between March 16 and March 22, Dining Services will be closing locations as students continue to leave campus. As this occurs, hours and locations will be updated on the [Dining website](#). As of March 22, Dining Services will fully transition to the Sharpe Refectory.

### For graduate students

- All courses for graduate students will be offered remotely beginning on Monday, March 30.
- Graduate student teaching assistants and teachers will be expected to continue with their work using remote learning.
- Graduate students may continue to conduct on-campus research, including working in libraries and labs.

### For medical students

Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education Allan Tunkel, MD, will be in direct contact with students at the Warren Alpert Medical School about any changes to their medical education.

## FACULTY

Brown's faculty will play an essential role in ensuring continuity in teaching and learning, as the University shifts to remote instruction for the remainder of the semester. The following points include guidance and notes on resources for key questions and concerns for faculty:

- **Remote Instruction:** Faculty should move all undergraduate and graduate courses, regardless of size, to remote instruction by Monday, March 30. Please be sure to review the new [Teaching & Learning pages of Brown's COVID-19 website](#) for information and resources to assist with the transition to remote instruction. Faculty should consider that their students may be scattered across multiple time zones with varying access to the internet and technology, and plan to make accommodations as necessary.
- **Research Laboratories:** Research laboratories, and other critical functions that support essential research activities, will continue to operate. We encourage you to refer to the [research impact information](#) prepared by the Office of the Vice President for Research, which provides guidelines related to sponsored projects and human subjects research, among other areas. You should use your best judgment about issues such as requiring graduate students and postdocs to be present in the lab and/or explore strategies through which they can work remotely.
- **Searches:** At this time, departments are asked to reschedule or virtualize all non-essential searches to the extent possible. If a search is underway, and some candidates have completed in-person visits, we encourage you to postpone the remainder of visits (rather than conducting them virtually), in the interest of ensuring that all candidates are treated equitably. If you have specific questions about faculty searches, please contact the Office of the Dean of the Faculty ([Joel\\_Revill@brown.edu](mailto:Joel_Revill@brown.edu)).
- **Visitors:** We are discouraging non-essential visits to campus. This is in line with the University's event and travel guidance, which will be re-evaluated after April 13. Please contact [travelcovid@brown.edu](mailto:travelcovid@brown.edu) if you have questions.
- **Academic appointments:** Academic appointments, including postdocs, that are scheduled to begin between now and July 1 should continue as planned in line with guidance related to new hires. Note that international appointees or those who have traveled to areas affected by COVID-19 should be prepared for the possibility that they will need to self-isolate for 14 days between arriving in the United States and coming to campus.

- **Faculty meetings:** We encourage you to postpone or hold virtually any non-essential meetings — department meetings, seminars, scheduled talks, etc. — and to plan thoughtfully any meetings that are essential, considering measures such as social distancing.
- **Governance committees:** At this point, major University governance committees (e.g. APC, TPAC, URC, FEC) should continue to meet as planned. We are also working on alternatives to in-person meetings, should circumstances warrant this. Members of these committees will be informed of changes as applicable.
- **Additional Questions:** If you have any additional questions or are seeking further guidance, please contact [Joel\\_Revill@brown.edu](mailto:Joel_Revill@brown.edu).

## STAFF

Brown has policies and practices in place to promote the well-being and safety of all employees. As an update to guidance issued by University Human Resources on March 3, we are providing information to employees on enhancements to University workplace policies to address the current impact of COVID-19. Accordingly, Brown has implemented a new category of paid leave specific to this event called “Paid Special Leave,” which provides for 10 business days of paid leave.

University policies may continue to be modified as more information becomes available. Employees can direct questions to University Human Resources at [universityhr@brown.edu](mailto:universityhr@brown.edu) or (401) 863-2141.

At this time, the University remains open for normal administrative operations. Effective immediately and until further notice, the following guidelines and information are being provided to assist employees in regard to the impact of COVID-19:

- All offices are being encouraged to postpone or hold virtually any non-essential meetings, and to plan thoughtfully any meetings that are essential, considering measures such as social distancing.
- Managers should prepare and discuss with their employees all possible Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA) based on department operational needs.
- Employees who are not sick, but who need to quarantine can request an AWA or a Special Leave for up to 10 business days to care for themselves.
- Employees who are not sick and need to provide care for a dependent or a household member in need of isolation can request an AWA or a Special Leave for up to 10 business days.
- Employees who are not sick but must provide dependent care due to a school closure may request an AWA or use sick or vacation time.
- Employees who are sick must remain at home and not report to work, and request a leave of absence.
- Employees who must remain at home to care for a sick dependent or household member may request an AWA or a leave of absence.

## COMMENCEMENT AND SUMMER

One of the biggest questions about campus events, especially for graduating seniors and their families, is whether Commencement and Reunion Weekend will take place as planned from May 22 to 24. We recognize that this is a major celebratory event in the lives of all graduates, and our hope is that the public health risks associated with COVID-19 may be reduced by later this spring.

At this point, we have not decided whether Commencement and Reunion Weekend can proceed in its traditional format and/or at its usual time. The University will continue to explore all possibilities, based on guidance from health officials, and will make it a priority to notify students, alumni, faculty and staff as soon as a decision is made. We expect to provide additional information in the coming weeks.

Similarly, many students, families and visitors have asked about summer programs at Brown — from Pre-College Programs, to courses and research opportunities for current Brown students, to the many events and conferences hosted on campus. At this time, we plan to proceed with these programs, but decisions will be guided by recommendations from public health authorities. We will post updates as decisions are made.

The University’s Core Crisis Team will continue its work in planning for campus operations, and we will continue to share information and address questions and concerns through the University’s comprehensive [COVID-19 response website](#) and additional updates to the community as needed.



BROWN

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