



March 19, 2020

Dear Students, Families, Faculty and Staff,

It is with heavy hearts but firm resolve that in consultation with our senior administration and with guidance from public health experts, we have made the decision to extend remote learning for students through the remainder of the Spring semester. Online instruction will begin on Monday, March 23 and continue through the completion of final exams in May.

Our students and the university's administration are deeply appreciative of the efforts of faculty and staff to adjust to this situation — all of us know it has not been easy and is now even harder.

We also announce to you that the university will follow Governor McMaster's executive order, released this afternoon, which says that only those employees whose presence is necessary in order to maintain continuity of remote educational offerings and to ensure the health and safety of their campuses need report to work. All other employees will continue to work remotely.

In addition, traditional May commencement ceremonies will be postponed. We are committed to and are actively exploring options for rescheduled, in-person ceremonies when it is safe to host them and will be planning experiences for graduates to celebrate their achievements. This change will not impact the degree completion status of those students who were scheduled to graduate in May. All other campus events are canceled through the end of the semester.

We realize that these actions will be deeply disappointing to our students, particularly those of you who are about to graduate and were looking forward to a final semester on campus. This is difficult for you and for your loved ones. It is also difficult for us.

And yet, the decision was clear. The coronavirus presents a serious risk to public health, and we must take these actions in order to best protect our students, faculty and staff. Social distancing is essential to slow the spread of this disease. The nation, and

the world, are facing an extraordinary challenge. We believe that it is precisely during such challenging times that we often see the best of each other. We're proud of the entire UofSC family for rising to the occasion with strength, compassion and resiliency.

There will be many questions in the hours and days to come, and we are working as quickly and thoughtfully as possible to answer them. Here's what we know now:

- Students previously granted permission to remain on campus due to extenuating circumstances will be allowed to stay.
- All other students residing in residence halls will have an opportunity to retrieve their belongings at a later date.
- In consultation with Student Health Services and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, University Housing is developing a schedule for retrieval and will update students as soon as possible.
- The state's Commission on Higher Education also is coordinating with colleges and universities in order to address housing and other service reimbursements to ensure student investments are protected.

The [coronavirus website](#) is updated regularly, so please continue to visit it daily.

Gamecocks, we're in this together. Thank you for your continued patience, support and creativity as we navigate this uncertain time and look forward to being back together on campus in the future.

Forever to Thee,



Bob Caslen, President



**Tayloe Harding, Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Provost,
Interim**