March 31, 2020

Dear Students,

We hope you are doing well as you continue your academic work to complete the spring 2020 semester. We know these are very unusual and unsettling times and we continue to keep you and your families in our thoughts during this pandemic. We are writing today to share some important updates to Chancellor Martin’s message that was sent to the university community on March 11.

Last week, the Departments of Public Health in St. Louis City and St. Louis County issued “Stay at Home” orders in response to the COVID-19 virus. These have been issued through April 22 and we anticipate that they will likely be extended into May at some point in the coming weeks. That means we are unable to project at this point when students, faculty, and staff will be able to return to the Danforth Campus. Today, only a small number of students who have been approved for late stay, and staff who have been deemed “essential” are permitted to be physically present on the Danforth Campus.

Chancellor Martin shared in his March 11 message that “...there will be no in-person courses taught in the classroom or any other setting until at least April 30, 2020.” At this time, we can confirm that, as you may have already anticipated, there will be no in-person assignments or final exams for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. Based on the information we have learned over the past few weeks, we have made this decision with the safety of our entire community in mind.

We also are working hard to finalize and process refunds related to residential life housing, dining, parking, and a partial refund on the student health fee. Information about these refunds, including the timeline, will be sent to you in a follow up email from Amy Kweskin, Vice Chancellor for Finance, and Rob Wild, Dean of Students, later this week.

We know residential students probably also have questions about your belongings that remain in campus housing. Despite the fact that we were able to successfully collect and ship essential items for over 2,000 students living in residential life housing, we know that many students still...
have items that were left behind. Please know that those items are safely secured. Given the directive we have received from our local health departments, we are not allowing students to return to retrieve their items and we are not yet able to finalize plans for packing, shipping or storing of student items. **As soon as the stay at home restrictions are lifted for St. Louis County and St. Louis City, we will communicate with students about their belongings.**

To our 2020 graduates, we know it was disappointing to hear about the cancellation of our Commencement Exercises on May 14 and 15. However, please know that your hard work and accomplishments will be honored in a unique and meaningful way. We have heard from many of you expressing your feelings of sadness over the loss of the traditional May Commencement ceremony, and also sharing smart and creative ideas for other ways to celebrate the Class of 2020. This feedback has been an important part of determining next steps. **Please rest assured that there will be an in person Commencement ceremony to recognize your accomplishments and we are working hard to determine when and how we can do that in a safe and responsible way.** Our Commencement team will be reaching out to you with updates as they develop. To be sure, the celebration of the Class of 2020 will be like no other.

Finally, if you are still in St. Louis living in university housing or off campus, or if you are living in another city with a shelter in place order, we can’t stress enough how important it is that you follow the order, stay at home, and encourage others to do the same. We realize this is a difficult ask during the springtime and at a time in your life when you should be immersing yourselves in the community and your friendships. But now is not the time. **Stay home, take care of yourselves, use your technology to check in on one another, and help our country flatten the curve.** Your generation plays such an important role in protecting so many others.

We hope all of you are safe and healthy during these unprecedented events the world is facing. We are grateful to all of you and your families for the messages of support we have received during the past few weeks. Please continue to stay connected with us and be on the lookout for additional updates from us in April.

If you need assistance or additional support, please reach out to your academic advisor, or contact our Dean of Students, Rob Wild at rob.wild@wustl.edu.

Sincerely,

Marion G. Crain, Interim Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Lori S. White, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs