

Subject: A Message to the Graduate Student Community
Date: Saturday, March 14, 2020 at 12:43:27 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Warner School Dean's Office
To: WS-Staff

All,

The message below was sent to all UR graduate students. It will likely answer some questions our students had, but prompt others. Please forward your students' questions to me and I will try to provide as answer.

Stay well,

Brian

Brian O. Brent
Earl B. Taylor Professor
Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
Warner Graduate School
University of Rochester
422 LeChase Hall
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From: Sturge-Apple, Melissa
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 5:40 PM
Subject: A Message to the Graduate Student Community

Dear Members of the University of Rochester Graduate Student Community, People and institutions around the world are working to address and respond to the evolving nature and implications of COVID-19, the disease caused by a coronavirus. At Rochester, the health and wellbeing of our University community are of utmost importance. Because of this, the difficult decision was made by senior leadership to alter academic instruction and student life on campus. I am writing to provide more details specific to graduate education as a follow-up to [University Leadership's email from Wednesday](#).

We understand that this has been a very challenging time for all of you and please know that we are with you during this difficult period. The proactive measures Rochester has implemented have the goal of mitigating the likelihood that coronavirus/COVID-19 will reach the local campus community and reduce the potential to harm the most vulnerable in our local Rochester community. We are all in this together. Below are some answers that I currently have to questions I have been hearing from students. Please visit the [University's dedicated coronavirus website](#) for regular updates, information, and resources.

Academic Instruction, Housing, and University Operations

1. **Instruction for graduate students at the University will take place online.** University ITS and our Department of Online Education have developed [information on preparing for remote teaching, learning, and working](#) and for [transitioning traditional courses to online courses](#). Consult with your respective schools for details of any program modifications that will be put in place for your academic program.
2. **Graduate students can and should remain in graduate housing** or in current residences off-campus. You do not need to return home to complete the semester. If you return home and break your lease, you will forfeit the security deposit per standard protocol. But, we want to emphasize that you are able to remain in your current housing.
3. **Graduate assistantship stipends will continue to be paid.** Check with your supervisor if you have questions about how your duties may change, especially for TAs, with the move to remote instruction only. In general, work in research laboratories will continue as normal.
4. **University Shuttle Service will continue to operate.** The Department of Transportation and Parking Management has adjusted some of the shuttle routes, effective March 18, to better meet the changing transportation needs of University community members during the response to COVID-19. The new schedules can be found at <http://www.rochester.edu/parking/shuttles>. Cognizant of social distancing, extra buses have been added to the heavily utilized shuttle lines to spread out rider capacity. All riders are free to choose whether to ride or wait for a shuttle based on their preference and comfort level, but please note that no standing will be permitted; all riders must have a seat. Additionally, please know that the shuttles are being disinfected very regularly throughout the day and wiped down after each trip.
5. **Limited University facilities will be open and times and restrictions will be posted on their websites.**
 - University Libraries: <https://www.rochester.edu/libraries/>
 - Athletics: <https://www.rochester.edu/athletics/>
 - Dining Services: <https://dining.rochester.edu/menu-hours/>
6. **All University-sponsored and -supported domestic and international travel is restricted until further notice.** The University also strongly discourages any non-essential personal travel domestically in the U.S. or internationally. We are trying to minimize the risk that travelers introduce coronavirus to the local community.

Self-Care and Prevention

1. **First and foremost, take everyday preventive actions** to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. This includes staying home when sick, appropriately covering coughs and sneezes, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, and washing hands often and thoroughly with soap and water.
2. **The University is emphasizing the primacy of *social distancing*** in all aspects of graduate training at Rochester. This means reducing the proximity of persons to one another as well as limiting the number of attendees at meetings, staying at least 6 feet away from others, riding bikes, or riding the shuttles at off-peak hours, etc.

3. If you have traveled abroad or if you have symptoms or think you have been exposed, or if family members, roommates, or others with whom you have close contact have symptoms or think they have been exposed – you should call University Health Service at (585) 275-2662 for guidance. Please call your UHS before you go to the office so that they can be prepared for your visit

4. **Finally, and most importantly, please try to find ways, especially remotely, to remain connected** to your local graduate community, colleagues in your graduate field and in disciplines across campus, and your friends and family outside of the local area. This is an important part of self-care. University resources available for assisting students are operating and ready to help, including:
 - CARE Network, <https://www.rochester.edu/care/resource-center/> (Support and student concerns)
 - International Services Office, <http://iso.rochester.edu/> (Resource for international students)
 - University Counseling Center (UCC), <http://www.rochester.edu/uhs/ucc/> (Counseling services for students)
 - University Health Service (UHS) <http://www.rochester.edu/uhs/> (Questions about illness, quarantines)

The situation with respect to COVID-19 is changing rapidly and we are paying close attention to the public health experts advising the University. We know there will be many questions as we work through this developing situation and think about ways we can come together as a community. We will share additional updates and some frequently asked questions (FAQs) in the coming days. Moreover, I would encourage you to contact your student representatives if you have concerns, questions, or want to connect. They are here for you and their contact information is listed below. Please know that both myself and your school deans are working diligently around the clock on your behalf. Our graduate students are an essential part of our University community and I firmly believe that we are stronger when we work together to support one another.

Take good care,

Melissa Sturge-Apple

Vice Provost of Graduate Education

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