

March 20, 2020

TO MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STAFF,

As you know, with the global spread of COVID-19, the University, along with the rest of the world, is facing unprecedented challenges. We have had to make some difficult decisions already, and more will undoubtedly follow.

The best evidence strongly suggests that the number of cases is likely to increase dramatically over the next several weeks. In anticipation of that development, I write to communicate the following decisions:

1. The University will move to remote work as soon and as quickly as possible, with full implementation to be completed by Wednesday, March 25. Your supervisor will inform you of the specific details of what that means for you.
2. The University remains committed to meeting our payroll commitments until at least the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 2020.

Certain essential functions of the University cannot, of course, be performed remotely. Employees responsible for these functions will work with their supervisors to determine how most safely and effectively to do their work. In some instances, employees may be redeployed to assist the University in performing new or different duties necessitated by the extraordinary situation in which we now find ourselves.

As we carry out our educational mission, the University remains committed to the health and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. That commitment includes, for so long as it is possible, continuing to compensate all our employees and bearing whatever burdens that events may eventually impose upon us fairly and equitably. In these times communities are tested. This community will meet, and pass, whatever tests we are required to take. We are all in this together, and we share our woes, our burdens, and, above all, our hopes. And we will get through this together.

I urge you to visit the [CDC website](#) for the latest guidance on how to protect yourself from the virus and what to do if you think you might be sick. The [Tennessee Department of Health website](#) has the latest information about cases in Tennessee. To view the latest information on steps the University is taking in response to the pandemic, see the [University's COVID-19 website](#), which is frequently updated.

I remain grateful to, and exceedingly proud of, those many members of this community who have so selflessly and without complaint assisted the University in adjusting to this new reality. Your patience, understanding, and commitment are both exemplary and inspiring. You are enabling those of us responsible for guiding the University through these rapids to do our work with courage and confidence.

Sincerely,

John McCardell
Vice-Chancellor