

March 14, 2020

To the University Community:

As you are well aware, the reality of COVID-19 is beginning to reshape our lives in fundamental ways. Sewanee is no exception. We have been monitoring developments closely and have determined that some significant adjustments to our routine are not simply warranted; they are mandatory. With careful consideration and after intensive research and discussion, we have made the difficult decision to move to remote learning for the remainder of the semester.

The health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and neighbors are our primary concerns, and we believe that the difficult decisions we've made are necessary to safeguard the health of our community and the many other communities to which we are connected.

In many ways, Sewanee is secluded, but we know that this virus respects no borders or angel-guarded gates. Because we live, learn, eat, and work in close community on the Domain, it would be difficult for us to ensure the health and safety of students, employees, community members, and visitors during an outbreak. By moving to remote learning, we aim to limit the number of people on campus while continuing to allow students to complete their coursework.

With this message, we want to communicate to you the most significant decisions that have been made about our plan for the remainder of this semester. Please be on the lookout for additional communications that will provide more detail. In brief:

- Spring break will be extended and classes will not be held March 23-27. All subsequent classes will be delivered through remote learning for the remainder of the Easter Semester.
- Classes will resume on Monday, March 30. Classes will be offered remotely beginning on that date. No classes will be held on campus.
- Early next week, we will share specific information about when and how College students returning to campus from spring break will be permitted and expected to retrieve all of their belongings, vacate their rooms, return their keys, and check out for the remainder of the academic year. Students currently on campus should prepare to vacate their rooms and should email [reslife@sewanee.edu](mailto:reslife@sewanee.edu) to schedule their checkout. For all other students, details about a checkout process will follow shortly.
- Students who are unable to return home for financial reasons, or who have other extenuating circumstances, including international students, students without reliable internet access, or students without a home or safe home may petition to remain on campus. Details on how to submit a petition will be made available early next week.
- Students in the School of Theology may remain in their campus housing but will not be allowed in Hamilton Hall or the Chapel of the Apostles. Single students who live in community housing (Workman or Ebey, for example) are strongly encouraged to move home or to a low-risk location off-campus for the remainder of the semester.
- At this point, the University is not closed, and we do not have plans to close the campus. Staff and faculty will continue to have access to their offices and labs. Services and

amenities on campus will be limited, and the University will practice recommended social distancing and mitigation efforts. The University will not be hosting in-person admission events or campus visits until further notice.

- In the coming days you will be receiving additional information that will address the many details of this necessary transition.

My colleagues and I are committed to ensuring that students, faculty, staff, and families will know in a timely way how these changes will affect them. We expect that students and families will have many questions, including some about retrieving students' belongings, academic advising, career counseling, work-study, comps, commencement, and more. Be assured that we will be communicating more information on these and other issues in the following days. Please check your email and the [covid19.sewanee.edu](https://covid19.sewanee.edu) website for regular updates.

We are also working on a continuity of work plan for University staff, and will get answers to employee concerns as soon as we can. We will have more details about technical support for faculty members, as well.

You will receive a series of communications that will keep you informed as more details are finalized. Please allow us the time to work out those plans. Please also know that we view the health of our community as our paramount concern.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their concerns and offers of support as our leadership team has monitored the COVID-19 situation and related developments in recent days.

I know that an important part of Sewanee's identity is the sense of community that we share on the Mountain. And I know that, especially for seniors, this will be heartbreaking news. But we are in this together, and we will stay connected even while separated by distance. I have enormous faith in this community—in your resilience, your ability to make the best of a difficult situation, and your willingness to do your part to keep others safe. Thank you for your support of each other during this extraordinarily challenging time.

John McCardell  
Vice-Chancellor