Dear Members of the Tuskegee University Community,

We are sharing updated information with our students and employees regarding our response to the coronavirus outbreak. First and foremost, thank you for your patience as we have been deliberate in considering how to address this growing health epidemic in a manner that’s in the best interest of our students, employees and others who visit our campus.

This week, members of our Community Health Task Force have met on several occasions to respond to hour-by-hour updates provided by the Alabama Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other government agencies. We also have been monitoring the precautions taken by our peer institutions in Alabama and the region. We are thankful that risks to the Tuskegee University campus remain low, as there have been no confirmed cases of coronavirus anywhere in Alabama.

Today, the task force — along with the university’s executive leadership and deans — made the following decisions regarding students returning from spring break, university-sponsored travel, and on-campus events. While this communication is lengthy, we’ve attempted to make it as comprehensive as possible based on the information we have available at this time.

**Extension of Spring Break**

In order to ensure academic continuity and to have time to consider the need to prepare to deliver virtual instruction, the university is extending Spring Break through March 22, 2020.

During the Spring Break extension, faculty and staff will engage in training and finalize alternate models of delivering courses. Students will receive guidance from the Office of the Provost in a separate communication that provides detailed instructions on the delivery of academic course content.

The work of educating our students and caring for those who remain on campus will continue without interruption. So, during this week, the university will maintain its regular operating hours and employees will report for work as normal. All faculty and staff should be available to answer queries and assist students by email and telephone during scheduled business hours as we implement remote teaching methods.

Also, during this time the university will continue to utilize aggressive sanitizing practices throughout campus spaces, as well as installing enhanced hand-washing
equipment in restrooms and placing hand-sanitizing stations in high-traffic areas.

Resuming instruction

All instruction will resume on Monday, March 23, 2020, using online and alternative methods of course delivery. Students must still meet course attendance and participation requirements set forth by the instructor or syllabus.

Students will receive additional information from the Office of the Provost and/or their instructor(s) in the coming week regarding how to participate virtually in their classes. If you develop symptoms of or are diagnosed with the coronavirus — thereby preventing you from participating in your required coursework — report the situation to your instructor(s), as well as the Division of Student Affairs at (334) 724-4746.

On-Campus Residency

We understand that some students will be unable to return home and will need to reside on campus during part or all of the remainder of the spring semester. Students choosing to do so will continue to receive housing, dining and other student services.

We encourage only students who are healthy to return to campus. Students exhibiting coronavirus symptoms — fever, dry cough and shortness of breath — should self-isolate for at least 14 days and consult their personal health provider for clearance before returning to campus residency.

If you have traveled internationally or to areas of the United States where the coronavirus is prevalent — yet show no symptoms — you should still contact the Division of Student Affairs at (334) 724-4746 to discuss if you should return to campus.

Campus Health Services

Students who chose to return to Tuskegee for on-campus residency can continue to rely on Student Health Services for medical care if the need arises. On-campus students who believe they are exhibiting coronavirus symptoms after their return to campus will be asked to first contact Student Health Services by telephone for guidance on reporting to its on-campus facilities. Staff will triage the student, and if necessary, contact the Alabama Department of Public Health for further care instructions.

University-sponsored Travel

Effective immediately and until further notice, all university-sponsored travel is suspended. This includes new travel and currently booked trips taken by employees, as well as any travel by vendors, speakers or lecturers coming to Tuskegee between now and April 30. Exemptions to this policy may only be granted by the Office of the President. The task force will reevaluate these guidelines and share updates as more information becomes available.
**On-campus Events**

At this time, all university events where audiences can potentially exceed 100 people, are canceled. This includes all athletics events, symposia, professional development events, pageants, probates, concerts and the like.

Task force members and university leadership will continue to evaluate these event restrictions as they pertain to events scheduled after April 30 — including spring commencement, summer study abroad programs and the like. Announcements regarding those activities will be made as the outbreak continues to evolve.

**Prevention is Key**

The best prevention to avoid exposure to or spreading the illness is still good personal hygiene, including:

- washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. Consult the CDC’s Handwashing website for additional guidance.
- avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- staying home when you are sick.
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash.
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

**Information for Faculty and Staff**

All university faculty and staff, unless you had previously approved leave, are expected to report for work on Monday, March 16. Employees who are symptomatic, have traveled internationally and/or are experiencing any of the symptoms related to COVID-19 — including fever, cough or shortness of breath — should contact their supervisors immediately, self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days, and consult their personal health provider for clearance before returning to campus.

Employees should expect additional guidance from the Office of the Provost and/or Office of Human Resources regarding continuity of instruction and other staffing guidance.

**Future Planning**

Tuskegee University continues to closely monitor developments and will continue to follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alabama Department of Public Health and the World Health Organization. We understand that
our policy guidelines will cause a change in how we function, but the safety of the greater campus community is always our top priority. Your cooperation and collaboration are necessary to ensure an appropriate response across the university.

Our task force and university leadership will continue to evaluate the situation and anticipate providing another update to you by the end of the day on Wednesday, March 18 — unless conditions warrant an earlier update.

Please continue to visit our Coronavirus Update webpage (www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus) for the latest information.

Sincerely,

Ruby Perry, DVM, Ph.D., DACVR
Acting President