

From: [Tuskegee University Office of Marketing and Communications](#)
To: [Tuskegee University Office of Marketing and Communications](#)
Subject: CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: A message from Acting President Ruby Perry
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 5:39:54 PM

Dear Tuskegee University Community:

We are living amid an unprecedented health crisis — one that our nation hasn't experienced since the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. As a result, Tuskegee University — and each of you, our students, parents, employees and alumni — has had to adapt to hour-by-hour changes, as well as at times public speculation and growing anxiety.

So, for your patience thus far — and in the weeks ahead — I say “thank you.”

I want to summarize for you some of the measures the university is taking to address health and operational matters as they relate to our continuing service to our students. Of course, these measures and more have been shared with our students and employees by email, and are outlined chronologically at www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus.

Continuing academic instruction

On Monday, March 23, the university will transition completely to online/virtual instruction for the remainder of the semester. Faculty have been participating in training this week to move from in-person to electronic instruction — relying on the Blackboard platform to which our students are already accustomed. Naturally, with that comes a host of situations unique to our professional, internship, clinical and graduate programs, and our academic leadership in those areas are now exploring those on a course-by-course basis.

We anticipate administering final exams through Blackboard or other forms of online/virtual technology. Again, the means of doing so will be determined on a course-by-course basis, but we do expect those to be administered within the timeframes outlined in our academic calendar. If adjustments are required, they will be announced to students in a timely manner.

Students experiencing issues during this online/virtual instruction period are asked to contact their instructors directly with concerns or bring those concerns to the attention of their respective department head or dean.

We continue to review our academic calendar with an eye for upcoming deadlines — many of which may have required students to address a matter in person on campus. This includes the upcoming English Proficiency Exam, registering for upcoming semesters, and similar academic requirements. Alternate means of meeting those deadlines remotely will be identified and communicated to students.

As we focus on meeting our students' academic needs, we also seek alternatives to their on-campus experience. That means identifying ways of keeping them engaged with the university and with each other — even at a distance — through virtual connections that meet their social, emotional and co-

curricular interests.

On-campus residency

After initially attempting to accommodate the residential needs of students returning from spring break, our Division of Student Affairs determined on Monday, March 16, that it is in our students' best interests to not return to campus to reside.

The university will grant exceptions to that policy in certain situations: a student's lack of an alternate residence, a student's lack of the computing technologies required of online/virtual instruction at his or her alternate residence, or an academic or employment hardship that requires a student to reside on campus. Students wishing to apply for an exception should complete and submit the Housing Exception Application — available for download at www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus — by week's end. Students who do end up remaining on campus will be consolidated into two residence halls and will receive essential services, including counseling, disability services, dining and student health services.

We recognize that some students who went home for spring break may not be able to return to campus to obtain their belongings from their residence hall rooms. Students and their families must arrange to obtain their belongings from the residence halls by May 2, 2020. Those arrangements can be made by contacting our Office of Housing & Residence Life at 334.724.4100 or 334.421.8384, or by emailing housing@tuskegee.edu. In the meantime, please note that students' personal belongings remain secured in our residence halls and are not at risk of being packed up or moved without their knowledge.

Continued university operations

At this time, the university expects to maintain normal operating hours so that it can serve the continuing needs of our students. That may require staggering our staffing or allowing some teleworking as employees also grapple with the personal challenges of the pandemic's effects on their families and their families' health. Supervisors are working with their teams and the university's leadership to ensure continued business continuity, but please understand that additional patience will be required during this time of leaner staffing.

Financial aid policies

Our Office of Student Financial Services continues to receive updates from the U.S. Department of Education on the continuance of federal financial aid, compensating students in work-study programs, and any changes to the process or deadlines to securing future financial aid. When we have greater clarity on those matters, we will share updates with you.

Student financial matters

Many students and parents have inquired about the university's policies regarding the refund or rebate of tuition, room and board, and related fees. **Tuskegee University will follow its written**

refund policy regarding prorating of room and board fees and will review each student's account on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Bursar's Office at 334.727.8538 for inquiries about this matter.

University events

As you know, all university events have been cancelled through April 30 — a prudent decision considering the CDC's guidance that in-person gatherings now be limited to five or fewer people. Guidance we are receiving from the Alabama Department of Public Health indicates that the pandemic may not reach its peak in the state until May.

As such, commencement will be postponed as our leadership continues to explore options to provide our pending graduates with the most authentic and memorable graduation experience possible. Rest assured that students scheduled to graduate will receive proper documentation of their achievement through transcripts and a mailed diploma so they can — without obstacle — transition from their current studies to the next phase of their professional or academic journey. The Registrar's Office will contact all qualifying graduates with more information — including graduation clearance procedures — when that information is available.

Students will receive information about summer and fall registration and on-campus housing for fall semester in the coming week. Summer instruction will continue with the practice of online/virtual instruction, and on-campus summer enrichment and outreach programs will be postponed. Based on decisions by the U.S. State Department and guidance by the CDC, the university is also canceling all study abroad programs for the summer.

Forecasting in the weeks ahead

As you can see, our administrators, faculty and staff have had to consider the pandemic from many different academic and operational perspectives — and those considerations will continue into the coming weeks.

Our Office of Communications, Public Relations and Marketing continues to monitor your inquiries and concerns through our social media platforms and through direct inquiries. If you have a matter that has yet to be addressed, please email our team at marketing@tuskegee.edu so they can catalog your inquiry and reach out to the appropriate university representative to secure an adequate answer for you. Please understand that many of those answers will not be immediately available, but we will continue to address those through our future communications to students by email and through our website at www.tuskegee.edu/coronavirus.

Until then, please accept my best wishes for productive spring studies and blessings of good health.

Sincerely,

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