



3-11-2020

## March 11, 2020: Covid-19 Update, Letter from the President

Kettering University

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# Kettering University

1700 University Avenue • Flint, Michigan 48504-6214

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

To: The Kettering University Community

Subject: 2020 March 11 Update: COVID-19 Coronavirus

**Neither the University nor our county in Michigan (Genesee) have a known case of COVID-19 at this time.**

As of late Tuesday night, two presumptive cases of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) were identified in Michigan (one in Oakland County, the other Wayne County/Metro Detroit). According to Governor Whitmer, these cases still need to be confirmed by the CDC, but we must presume that regardless, we will soon see active cases in Michigan and the region.

Thank you for the calm and care that you are demonstrating as we work together to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on our community.

Our COVID Response Team formed in late January has been meeting regularly since then. During that time, it has been closely monitoring the latest information on the novel coronavirus and taking proactive and prudent measures to ensure the health and safety of our community consistent with the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The University also has academic and business continuity plans that will be activated if needed.

The University is following the advice of Public Health authorities and at this time classes and events on campus continue. Regular updates will be posted on the University's website and communicated internally to the campus. This is a rapidly evolving situation, so it is important to continue to check regularly the University website (<https://www.kettering.edu/covid-19>) for updates in addition to public health advisories on the virus which may be accessed through our website as well.

We will continue to communicate regularly with you as more information is available. The situation is evolving, and we will continue to make any changes to our operations to support the health and safety of our community.

## Health Services

The University, including the COVID Response Team and the President, are in regular contact with area medical experts and local health care facilities. The University has in place action plans to provide support for students, faculty and staff if and as needed.

All of the Kettering community is asked to continue to self-monitor for signs of the flu/influenza or COVID-19. We ask any student, faculty, or staff member who meets the CDC criteria for concern (found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>) to self-isolate and avoid contact with others, except to get medical care.

For faculty and staff, if you are concerned about someone in the workplace who is ill and exhibiting flu like symptoms or have concerns about safety in your workplace, please speak with your supervisor.

COVID Response Team

## Update to the Kettering Community

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Employees in the workplace who are ill with flu-like symptoms should advise their supervisor, stay home and seek appropriate medical advice.

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 and the flu is through prevention:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve or a tissue which you use only once before discarding •  
Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick

### **If You Feel Sick**

**Call ahead** before visiting your health care provider or the Wellness Center. Do not go to campus, work, or public areas or use public transportation. Students should call their primary health care provider or the Wellness Center on campus at (810) 762-9650; faculty and staff should call their primary health-care provider.

When you call, tell your provider that you have or suspect you may have COVID-19. This will help them direct you appropriately as well as to take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

### **Campus Events and Visitors**

As the outbreak progresses, it may become necessary to move to a broader implementation of social distancing practices across our campus. The COVID Response Team is currently assessing upcoming events on campus for impact on our community. **If you are planning a large (100+ person) university event on or off campus in March or April, please notify the Office of the President ([president@kettering.edu](mailto:president@kettering.edu)) of that plan.**

Otherwise, previously scheduled events on campus have not been canceled or postponed. This is subject to change as the situation evolves.

Visitors to campus are asked to respect our efforts to protect the health and well-being of our community and to not come if they are experiencing symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has either traveled to a CDC identified Level 2/Level 3 country or is ill.

### **University Response, Alerts**

If we find it prudent to suspend on-campus activities in whole or in part, you will be notified through the University's campus-wide alert system, **Kettering Alert**. Please review your notification settings on the Kettering Alert [mykettering](#) webpage to make sure your settings are correct.

Kettering Alert will also be used to inform students, staff, and faculty when there are updates to existing programs and/or significant changes to the status of COVID-19 in the region. The alert, which will come in the form of an email and text will not be used unless there is important information the entire campus needs to know.

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## **Alternative Instruction**

While it is not possible to predict exactly what will happen, we can use the experiences of other campuses in our planning. In more heavily impacted areas of our country, such as the Pacific Northwest or New England, we are aware that a number of universities and colleges have announced forms of physical closures and moves to virtual learning, but many institutions in those same areas also remain open.

We will also see larger institutions in Michigan do this as well, as they represent large concentrations of people in an environment where social distancing may be especially difficult. Smaller institutions like Kettering are fundamentally different in nature, however, and our response will not simply mimic the response of others, but will be developed taking those differences into account. If the experience of other states is a guide, we may see large public institutions in our state close, while many smaller private ones, located in different areas of the state, are able to remain safely open.

We are preparing for this eventuality, but do not believe such action is warranted at this time at Kettering.

Our faculty and students have asked about possible impacts to instruction and what steps they should take. As we have continued to monitor the progression of COVID-19 in Michigan, we have also been developing and implementing a broader plan to account for a variety of scenarios, including actively training and supporting our faculty to offer **all** courses virtually in the event that we find it prudent to suspend campus academic operations. Our faculty have responded to this challenge unreservedly and are moving quickly to create course images in Blackboard for all courses while also refreshing their skills in using the asynchronous and synchronous collaboration tools provided by the University like Collaborate.

Obviously, ceasing on-campus face-to-face instruction will have profound disruptive effects on our students that simply moving to virtual instruction will not mitigate, and we are mindful of this in our planning. Laboratory and project-based classes may have to be delayed and the progress of students impacted. Moving to a fully virtual course delivery model in short order for an institution that is founded on personal face-to-face attention is a formidable task. Fortunately, over the past several years we have built a world-class virtual capability in Kettering Global, and through Kettering Global we have resources to help faculty and students work remotely in the event of an unexpected campus closure. Members of the Kettering community are presently working tirelessly to support such a transition.

But keep in mind that even without a formal closure, brief interruptions to our operations for cleaning or other targeted response is a likely scenario.

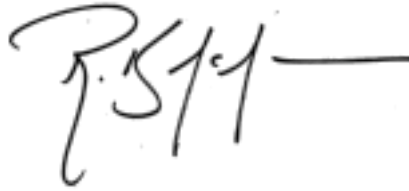
We know many questions remain unanswered by this communication, and we are working to provide answers and scenarios covering all of them in this rapidly evolving situation. We appreciate your patience and understanding as the University responds to this challenging situation. Thank you to all who are working so hard to ensure the safety of our community and the continuity and integrity of our operations.

As our plans and approaches mature, in consultation with medical and public health experts, as well as our own academic affairs team, we will keep you informed. Even as we face a rapidly shifting and evolving range of issues to address, I know that our shared commitment to the well-being of our

community will always guide our actions.

Thank you & Warmest Regards,

Dr. Robert K. McMahan  
*President and Professor of Physics  
Chair, COVID Response Team*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. K. McMahan', followed by a horizontal line.

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