



3-16-2020

March 16, 2020: Covid-19 Update, Letter from the President

Kettering University

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Kettering University

1700 University Avenue • Flint, Michigan 48504-6214

Monday, March 16, 2020

To: The Kettering University Community

Subject: 2020 March 16 Update: COVID-19 Coronavirus;

First, let me begin by speaking to you personally. I understand how uncertain you feel about the future of the spread of COVID-19, and about the impact of the changes we are putting in place to address it. I, like you, am experiencing this for the first time, and everything we hear in the media adds to the sense of uncertainty we all feel. It is easy for this uncertainty to become fear, and for fear to arouse feelings of anxiety. It is happening to all of us.

We are all living this with you. We care deeply for you, our colleagues, and our students, and we are working to do everything we think is wise to protect the health and safety of our community during this unprecedented public health challenge. We are strong, as a community and as a nation, and we will come through this successfully. Social distancing doesn't mean that we can't reach out to each other – and I know you are, because I see it every day.

We know you want answers. What makes us all feel better is finding answers to the questions that are distressing us. We are working hard to provide them, and to do the right thing, in the face of events that are changing very quickly. Sometimes we simply don't have them, though. Often we do but sometimes changes in the situation happen so quickly that we have to stop writing a communication on an issue in mid-stream because changes require us to completely rethink our approach.

This situation is extraordinary and it requires action on our part; but it also requires calm and focus. We are a strong community, and we share a passion for the uniqueness that is Kettering and for our students and mission. COVID-19 has not changed that - nor will it. I have seen countless acts of graciousness and caring in our community and throughout our leadership over the past few weeks as this issue has emerged. My trust and confidence in all of us to act in the best interests of our students and each other has only strengthened and grown as a result.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our mission and to our students during this time. I know many of you are putting in many extra hours and assuming new responsibilities to help us as a community to address the many challenges this situation presents. And you are doing this during a time of heightened fear and insecurity, while also managing your own private uncertainties and pressing family issues.

Through your actions, you have shown abundantly and clearly your commitment to and your passion for Kettering. Again, thank you.

We have taken many substantial actions over the past weeks, and undoubtedly, there will be more that we will need to take as the situation evolves. Our COVID Response Team, which has members drawn from across the University, has been meeting daily to make sure our response is appropriate and to evaluate all of these approaches.

A university is very complex and has many moving parts, and we are bound not to get everything right the first time over the next few weeks. You may wonder why we have done certain things and why we have not done others. Given how quickly the situation is changing, we all feel challenged to keep up. But we, like you, are working very hard to get everything right.

COVID Response Team
Update to the Kettering
Community

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The actions we have taken and are taking in response are substantial, but please know that they are not taken lightly. As the situation in our community evolves, we will continue to change to meet any challenges we face with the safety and success of you, your family, our students, and community kept front-of-mind.

Today, I would like to announce the following changes to our operations:

Virtual University Operations

The work that our staff carries out each and every day is comprehensive and varies widely, and we recognize the work of many of our faculty and staff requires being on campus. There are important on campus operations that must be sustained to support our educational, residential, and research functions.

However, there are those who are able to work remotely. In order to continue, in the face of an evolving situation, and to act always to protect the health and safety of our community, **Kettering is instituting an initial optional remote work period beginning Wednesday, March 18, through Friday, April 3.** Further extensions of this period, if required, will be included in future communications.

During this period, area supervisors have the option and broad flexibility to establish work schedules and remote or on-campus work requirements under criteria approved by their respective Vice President. Individual remote work decisions, schedules, and assignments for staff will be made by area supervisors; reporting requirements for these decisions will be established by their respective Vice President.

Your supervisor will be in direct contact with you this week about how your unit or functional area will manage your specific responsibilities during this period. Laboratory staff will receive specific direction from their deans and department chairs. For those in key, on-campus operations that must continue, your supervisor in these areas will communicate directly with you to ensure that these services continue.

Staff pay and benefits during this initial remote work period will not be affected. Supervisors have broad discretion to create strategies appropriate to their area, including staggered on-campus and virtual assignments, etc. I am suspending any need for staff to execute a formal Remote Work Agreement during the period, however, you and your supervisor must agree on work expectations and communication protocols if you are working remotely.

With many staff working remotely, does this mean that campus is closed? No, Kettering will not cease all operations and there will be members of the community living on campus and staff engaged in operations that must continue. During this time, we will continue our cleaning, disinfecting, social distancing, and other best practices to keep our campus safe.

And again, if you are ill please stay home and if you become sick at work, especially with respiratory illness, please leave work and contact your health care provider.

Changes to Group Meetings Policy

Consistent with the CDC's recently updated guidance on large meetings, we are modifying our group meeting restrictions as follows, effective immediately:

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- ALL on-campus events over 50 persons are cancelled. This applies to both University affiliated or externally organized events. All exceptions must be approved by the Office of the President, regardless of the current state of planning or commitments made.

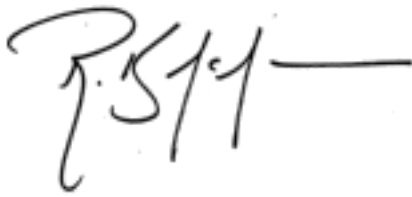
Dining Hall and Recreation Center Closures

Earlier today, Governor Whitmer issued a broad Executive Order¹ ordering the closure of a wide range of public accommodations and facilities. Our dining hall, recreation center, and FIRST Center appear to fall under the Governor's definition of a public "educational" accommodation as defined in the order.

- Effective 3 p.m. today and continuing through 8:00 a.m. on April 1, 2020, I am closing the Recreation Center, the FIRST Center, and all in-dining seating in dining areas.
- The Sunrise room is to operate take-out only, and BJ's and Einstein's are to close. The seating in BJ's and the area itself will remain open for use, but there will be no food service at that location. • All access to any of our facilities by members of the public, meaning those without a university affiliation, is withdrawn until further notice.
- Subject to future announcement, we are currently evaluating the ability of Einstein's to offer take away dining only, and if feasible, Einstein's will remain open during the prescribed period under this restriction, in compliance with the Governor's order.

Please 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.

Thank you & Warmest Regards,



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

¹ https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/03/16/file_attachments/1401753/EO%202020-9.pdf

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