



3-24-2020

## March 24, 2020: Covid-19 Update, Letter from the President

Kettering University

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Tuesday, March 24, 2020

To: The Kettering University Community

Subject: 2020 March 24 – Spring Term Scheduling

## **Executive Summary of Changes Detailed in This Letter**

We greatly appreciate your patience as we work as rapidly as possible to meet all of the widely varying needs of our community under these conditions. Consistent with our commitment to do so as early as possible, we now are able to make a number of decisions concerning the operation of the University in the spring term. Primary among these are:

- Students are not exempted from the Governor’s stay-at-home order. While it is in effect (March 24 – April 13) students, other than those approved to reside in Thompson Hall, will not be permitted on campus.
- Spring term will begin as scheduled on April 6.
  - April 6-10: Academic Preparation Week using Virtual Delivery
  - April 13 through at least May 1: Regular Course Schedule using Virtual Delivery • No later than Monday, April 20, we will communicate the decision to further extend virtual delivery in the term or to transition to face-to-face on campus delivery on May 4.

In earlier emails, I wrote that we would communicate to the Kettering community our plans for beginning the next semester as early as possible, but no later than April 8. We established this date to give us time to ensure that our response is appropriate to the situation, that we were remaining in compliance with the wide range of federal and state regulations, and that our students’ progress to graduation would not be adversely impacted by any actions we took.

We are not on the same schedule as other universities in Michigan or the U.S. These schools are on a semester calendar, which means they are in the middle of their second and final term of the year; whereas, we are in the last week of our third term, and are preparing for exams and the beginning of our fourth. They end their academic year in May, and have a long summer hiatus until the beginning of their fall term; we end our spring term in mid-June, and have only two weeks until we begin our summer term in early July.

We are proud of our differences because they produce such amazing outcomes for our students. This means we need to respond differently from other institutions to this situation. We have had to develop our own plans that are specific to the needs of our students in both A and B sections, and then to make sure that we are able to execute them effectively.

We understand the anxiety that everyone feels about the current situation, because we are all living this with you. These situations are hard on all of us. We regularly communicate with you – even while the situation may be developing and outcomes are changing – in the hope of providing insight into not only what we are doing, but why.

## Update to the Kettering Community

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For example, yesterday the Governor issued a stay-at-home order for the entire state of Michigan. Only two days before that, her office told us definitively that this option was not being considered. Events are moving that quickly. We anticipated it and have been preparing for it, nonetheless. In compliance, we have now limited campus activity to essential functions.

Our commitment to you is and always has been to act to protect the safety and health of the Kettering community while responding appropriately and responsibly to the situation as it evolves. No single letter can contain all of the information you may wish to see, nor can it answer every question possible in a community this large. However, we also maintain a website with a tremendous amount of information on our operations and our response, along with external links to even more. You may find it at [www.kettering.edu/covid-19](http://www.kettering.edu/covid-19). This site is updated daily; but, if after reviewing it, you still have a question, you may email it to [covid-19@kettering.edu](mailto:covid-19@kettering.edu). We are also monitoring relevant social media and will respond there as well.

We greatly appreciate your patience as we work as rapidly as possible to meet all of the widely varying needs of our community under these conditions. Consistent with our commitment to do so if possible, and earlier than originally anticipated, we now able to make a number of decisions concerning the operation of the University in the spring term. These are detailed below:

### **Detailed Timeline of Changes to the Spring Term Schedule**

#### **Effective Immediately**

- Students are not exempted from the Governor's stay-at-home order, therefore while it is in effect (12:01 a.m., March 24 – April 13):
  - Students, other than those approved to reside in Thompson Hall, will not be permitted on campus. Exceptions to this must be approved in writing by the President or the Dean of Students.
  - All student activity centers, e.g. the SAE Garage, t-Space, etc. are closed and no access by students will be permitted.

#### **Between Today and April 6**

- Residence halls will close March 28.
  - Students approved to reside on campus will be supported as usual in our residence halls and dining facilities until that date.
    - Any student needing to remain on campus in Thompson Hall after March 28 must obtain explicit written approval to do so from the Dean of Students. Students should contact the Office of Student Life (or the Office of International Programs for international students) to obtain this authorization.
- After March 28 and through the break, a reduced meal service will be available to those authorized to stay in Thompson Hall, although service hours will be limited. Meals will be provided to-go only.
- Under specific provisions of the Governor's stay-at-home order, the campus will continue to operate

on a limited basis, but most University buildings will be closed.

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**April 6 – May 1: Week 1-4 of Spring Term 2020**

- Spring term will begin as scheduled on April 6.
- All course content will be delivered virtually during this period.
- Last day to add or drop courses for the term will be April 15.
- Last day for course withdrawal for partial refund will be May 10.
- **No later than Monday, April 20, we will communicate the decision to further extend virtual delivery in the term or to transition to face-to-face on campus delivery on May 4.**
  - If we return to on-campus delivery on May 4:
    - Thompson Hall will reopen to returning students on May 3.
    - On campus delivery under our regular schedule will resume on May 4.
  - If we do not return to face-to-face delivery on May 4:
    - Virtual delivery will continue until a return to campus is reasonable and prudent, lacking assurance of which we will commit to delivering instruction virtually for the remainder of the term.
- Under specific provisions of the Governor’s stay-at-home order, the campus will continue to operate on a limited basis, but most University buildings will be closed while the order is in effect; however, our University will remain open during this period and our operations will continue with appropriate measures to protect the health of all on our campus and in our community.

**Detailed Course Delivery Schedule by Week:**

*Week 1 (April 6-10) Academic Preparation Week*

- Delivery during this period will be virtual only.
- Assignments in the first week will be substantive and count toward the term credit. • Course syllabi, including detailed course plans, course expected outcomes, and other relevant course information will be uploaded to Blackboard no later than April 4.
- Class activities will be held during the scheduled class (and lab) times.
- No exams or quizzes will be administered during the first week and no homework or projects will be assigned during the first week.

*Week 2-4 (April 13-May 1) Regular Course Schedule*

- Delivery during this period will be virtual only.
- During this period labs will be conducted via simulation on KUCloud ([kucloud.kettering.edu](http://kucloud.kettering.edu)) or other alternative methods.
- Lectures will be delivered synchronously using the Bb/Collaborate platform. •

Class activities will be held during the scheduled class (and lab) times.

- Student Support services will be delivered virtually.

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- The Registrar's Office will provide remote help for students' registration issues, drop/add requests, and other requests related to student record management. (810) 762-9775 or [academicsuccess@kettering.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@kettering.edu)
- The Academic Success Center (ASC) will continue to engage students and address their needs in advising, ADA accommodation, etc. (810) 762-7476 or [registrar@kettering.edu](mailto:registrar@kettering.edu)
- The Office of International Program (OIP) will continue to manage international student affairs, travel related requests and issues, study abroad preparation, and international partnership management. (810) 762-9869 or [international@kettering.edu](mailto:international@kettering.edu)
- The Library will continue to provide support to faculty and students in accessing library resources virtually including electronic textbooks. (810) 762-7814 or [library@kettering.edu](mailto:library@kettering.edu)

### **Beyond May 1**

Week 5 (May 4) *Anticipated Return to Face-to-Face on Campus Operations*

- Thompson Hall will reopen to returning students for move-in on May 3.
  - As appropriate, account credits and/or refunds will be issued to impacted students for the partial loss of access to room and board over the first 4 weeks of the term.
- Virtual Delivery will end and we will return to face-to-face instruction on campus on May 4.

### **Why Are We Not Moving Now to Virtual Delivery for the Entire Term?**

At this time, given our best evaluation of our situation in light of information we are receiving from federal and state agencies, we believe we will be able to return to on-campus, face-to-face delivery and to permit returning students to return to Thompson Hall after May 1, six weeks from now. Should the situation change in the interim and make such a return inadvisable, we are preparing to deliver the entire term virtually.

Many of our undergraduate courses have significant laboratory or hands-on, project-based components. There are currently no readily available virtual replacements for many of these. We are working to identify virtual alternatives where they exist, and to develop those that do not. We remain strongly committed to the value of a hands-on, laboratory-based education for our students, so it is our hope to return to normal operations if prudent to provide that experience for our students.

### **What is the status of Commencement?**

At this time, we continue to hold open the possibility of holding our Commencement ceremony as scheduled in June, as it is the ultimate celebration and recognition of accomplishment for all of our

students. However, since Commencement represents a large and concentrated public assembly it may not be possible to hold Commencement as scheduled even if we have returned to face-to-face course delivery. We will update the Kettering community as our plans for this become clearer.

## **Cooperative Education**

We have received reports that some co-op companies have begun to adjust placements this term as they implement remote work plans and adjust their operations in response to COVID-19. Each organization's

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response has been different and we continue to encourage our students to engage actively with both their co-op employer and with their co-op manager.

The admissions and cooperative education teams have been reaching out to admitted students, current students, and active co-op partners to gather insight and to provide coaching and guidance. The number of impacted students has so far been fairly limited, however, we have plans in place to assist students and incoming students grappling with this situation.

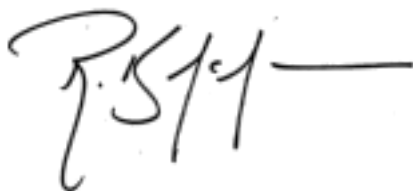
Some students originally scheduled for a coop term in the spring may instead choose to enroll in classes for that term. We are closely monitoring this and are prepared to add class sections as needed to make it possible for them to do so.

We are also working to secure external sources of gap funding for students impacted by COVID-19. More will be communicated on this in the near future.

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.

Please continue to check the University website (<https://www.kettering.edu/covid-19>) regularly 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 with you as more information becomes available.

Thank you & Warmest Regards,



Dr. Robert K. McMahan

*President and Professor of Physics  
Chair, COVID Response Team*

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