

March 17, 2020

To the campus and local communities,

I am writing to clarify Frostburg State University's current status in this quickly evolving COVID-19 crisis.

We are committed to continuing to operate as an educational institution, even though the current situation will change what that looks like for the time being.

1. When spring break ends and classes resume, instruction will be completely online – no classes are offered face-to-face – until at least April 6. About 10% of our instruction, such as labs, cannot be presented online. Academic leadership and faculty are working on alternatives for this instruction.
2. As an institution, our employees have moved to teleworking wherever possible on campus. Over 83% of staff can work away from campus for part or all of their work week. Work in some areas like police, facilities maintenance, lab managers, and health services will need to be done on campus. Individuals on campus have been instructed in social distancing and staying home if they feel ill. Added training is being offered on teleworking tools.
3. There has been much concern expressed about allowing residential students to return to campus following spring break. We anticipate these numbers to be quite low, as less than a third of the Frostburg campus' student population lives in the residence halls, and all students have the option of studying from home. Yet we also recognize that among our student population are students for whom campus is the only option. We have international students, students who do not have another place to call home, and students whose home situation makes studying online impossible.
4. Campus services will be available, but like everything else, they will be adjusted to fit our changing circumstances and our reduced campus population. Food will continue to be provided by Chartwells, an independent national company that has protocols for following federal and state guidelines, even as they change. How food will be provided will be determined by those guidelines.

We are continuing to adapt as new guidance is developed, and the University will not violate the mandates of the State of Maryland. The athletic and recreational facilities in the Cordts PE Center have been closed, as well as the fitness center in the Lane Center. Campus events such as CES programming are being canceled. Gatherings will be kept to fewer than 10 people.

Chancellor Perman, whom I and the other USM presidents speak to at least three times a week, is aware of and approves of our plans, and he understands our need to be available for those students who need to be here for one reason or another. Other institutions are offering similar accommodations, although they may be expressing it differently.

I agree with Chancellor Perman when he says that all USM schools – FSU included – are a *public good*. As he said in his statement to the Regents last night:

“Keeping in mind our obligations to student and employee safety, USM institutions will remain open—to the degree possible—so that we can carry out our public missions in education, research, and service.”

We do not have immediate answers to every question, as this is uncharted territory for all of us. Please be patient as we work to address the multitude of uncertainties ahead of us. This is not business as usual. It can't be. Still, our students are depending on us to respond compassionately. I am committed to making sure our campus remains a safe and healthy learning environment for the entire University community during these unprecedented times.

For the most up-to date information, visit www.frostburg.edu/covid-19