

From: [Office of the Provost](#)
To: [KU Lawrence All Staff, Faculty and Affiliates](#)
Subject: Maintaining Community in a Time of Social Distancing – March 19
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A message from Chancellor Douglas A. Girod and Provost Barbara A. Bichelmeyer

Maintaining Community in a Time of Social Distancing – March 19

Staff and faculty –

Today we want to check in with you and learn how you're doing. The scope of what we're all dealing with is unprecedented for many of us. The daily and weekly routines that guided us through our lives have been disrupted. We understand you may feel adrift and even sad about these changes and the isolation we're all encountering.

Please take time to stay in touch with your colleagues. It was always a part of our daily lives as we passed in the hallways or gathered for meetings, and there's no reason for our friendships and Jayhawk community to decline. We have tools that make being connected easier than ever before.

Supervisors, there is an important role we need you to play right now. Vice Provost for Operations Mike Rounds today sent all Lawrence and Edwards Campus supervisors resources to help you manage activities remotely. Please apply that information and use our technology tools to keep your team connected and focused on the work at hand. Human Resource Management has additional helpful [guidance on teleworking](#), and the [remote.ku.edu website](#) identifies the tools that can make it all possible.

It is important that each one of us takes care of ourselves and the others we work with. The Public Health Planning Team has created a voluntary and [confidential information form](#) for faculty and staff to fill out if they learn they are part of a COVID-19 contact investigation. Professionals will be able to follow up to determine if additional actions are required for our campus community.

[Watkins Health Services](#) is open for some immediate in-person care. People who need attention should go to the main entrance where they will be screened for the reason of their visit. Individuals showing signs of respiratory illness will be evaluated at the main entrance. Routine provider appointments

are suspended unless they can be done by videoconference. The pharmacy is open.

All KU employees are encouraged to reach out for personal help if it's needed. Benefits-eligible employees and their dependents can get assistance through the state's [Employee Assistance Program](#). The program provides short-term counseling services, legal advice, money management assistance and much more. If you suspect a colleague is struggling to adjust, reach out and ask them. Help them connect to services they may need.

Care for our Students

Just as we adjust to our new work reality, our students will be adjusting, too. Our measures to protect their health require them to establish physical distance from their friends and their mentors. Many will need help transitioning from their previous normal, and each one of us has the power to help them endure these times.

- **Learning:** Some students are familiar with online study, however many will find this a completely new experience that requires a different approach. Point them to the student section of remote.ku.edu. Faculty, be willing to make accommodations for your students as the semester continues. What works for some may not work for all.
- **Wellbeing:** Students who are struggling emotionally can connect remotely with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#). Those who need support or who want to initiate support with a provider in their home community can contact CAPS at 785-864-2277. And of course [Watkins](#) is available for students still in the region.
- **Food, Finances and Shelter:** Some students may be concerned about housing, food or financial issues. We know that Gov. Laura Kelly enacted an executive order this week that [temporarily prohibits evictions and foreclosures](#) – a measure sought by Student Senate leadership. Many students who work in the Lawrence business community may find their work assignments cut or eliminated entirely as businesses shut down. [Student Money Management Services](#) is available remotely to help these students figure out next steps. As a result of the pandemic, some students will be at even greater risk of food insecurity. Our Campus Cupboard partner Just Food has developed [new distribution methods](#) to serve the community and our students while maintaining social distancing practices.
- **All-around Support:** If you encounter students facing exceptional difficulty, whether it is related to health or other life circumstances, you may submit a care referral to [Student Support and Case Management](#) for individualized support and connection to campus and community resources.

Closing Thoughts

It's during times of crisis that we often see the best of human nature. Our response to COVID-19 has the capacity to be both cathartic and restorative.

Give yourself permission to figure out what telework practices work well for

you. Give yourself permission to be connected to colleagues and students. Seek help if you need it. Offer help where you can. And please keep an eye open for the most vulnerable in our Jayhawk community. Many will need help in the days to come. Students who've lost employment most certainly will need a reassuring environment and guiding hand to make it through this crisis. You may be among the first to notice their challenges. Our interaction with them and with each other has the power to be transformative.

Respectfully,

Doug and Barb

Douglas A. Girod
Chancellor

Barbara A. Bichelmeyer
Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

