

Dear members of the Northwestern community,

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread across the country and in Illinois, we are taking significant steps, in consultation with Governor J.B. Pritzker's office, to prevent its spread on our campuses and protect the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff.

First, for Northwestern schools that operate on the quarter system, we are extending Spring Break by one week. When classes resume, beginning April 4, they will be conducted remotely for at least three weeks. Classes that do not lend themselves to remote instruction will be addressed separately. University leaders will reassess the situation by April 17 and decide then whether to continue remote teaching or to return to in-person instruction by April 27. We will provide additional guidance on the transition to remote classes in the days to come. A [website outlining essential resources](#) for teaching has been established and will continue to be updated.

For NU-Q and Chicago-campus programs, which are in the middle of their terms, classes will be taught remotely beginning March 31, if not sooner. We will provide further details as quickly as we can.

We want to be clear — Northwestern University will remain in operation. Research will continue. The business of the University will continue. But we believe it is important to limit our community's potential exposure to COVID-19, and to limit the spread of the virus in our area, by conducting classes remotely, thus reducing the number of gatherings that can result in close contact.

Please keep in mind that the situation is fluid and as COVID-19 spreads, if something significantly impacts the safety of our community in the coming days, our plans could evolve.

For Students

Students who live on campus should plan to depart following their final exams and, if possible, should not return until further notice. We understand that some students consider Evanston or Chicago their home, and some, including international students, cannot leave the University at this time.

The University understands that this is a difficult moment, and we will support you in the time ahead. Student Affairs will provide further details on resources tomorrow.

For students who remain on campus, residence halls will remain open, along with dining services. Northwestern Libraries and other resources will be available. Although most functions of the University will continue, some services could be limited or operate under limited schedules and staffing. Additional guidance for those who remain on campus will be provided shortly. All students — whether leaving campus or staying — should update their permanent address in CAESAR.

Given graduate clinical education includes in-person interactions to meet graduation requirements, we will proceed with clinical activities so long as they are consistent with other University policies and educational sites remain open. We will operate under vigilant protocols to safeguard the health of students, patients, staff and faculty. Graduate research activities also will continue under similar circumstances.

Faculty and Staff

We know that some parents and caregivers in our Northwestern community have been or may be impacted by closings at daycare providers or schools or the loss of other caregiver support. Northwestern's schools, departments and other units should err on the side of flexibility when deciding whether to let their employees work from home in order to care for their children or attend to other family responsibilities.

We ask that instructors be flexible in how they approach the remaining two weeks of Winter Quarter. While many final assignments will be able to move forward as planned, we strongly encourage you to consider alternative arrangements to a traditional final exam. Additional guidance for faculty will be coming shortly from the Office of the Provost.

We realize the changes outlined above are disruptive and present challenges. These decisions were made in consultation with health officials and with our community's protection in mind. A number of details must still be addressed, but we wanted to inform you of these changes immediately, so you can begin planning for the Spring Quarter. Your dean or vice president will write directly with additional guidance.

Looking Ahead

We are constantly evaluating the situation. Our goal is to communicate with you quickly and openly so that you can plan accordingly. Residential students who leave campus for Spring Break should take everything needed for your coursework, including textbooks, paperwork and other materials. We want to ensure you are able to do your work remotely.

For students who are set to graduate this spring, the University is evaluating the coursework required for you to complete your degrees and graduate on time. We anticipate Commencement activities will be held as scheduled.

Northwestern's [COVID-19 website](#) is the best source of information about the impact of the virus and provides answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs).

In addition, we have assembled a University team to field questions that are not addressed by the above-mentioned FAQs. Please email nu-covid@northwestern.edu or call 847-467-4111. Although our team might not have immediate answers, they will work to find them for you.

Nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our community. We truly appreciate your patience, your understanding and your partnership in this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Morton Schapiro

President and Professor

Jonathan Holloway

Provost and Professor

Craig Johnson

Senior Vice President for Business and Finance

Julie Payne-Kirchmeier

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs