

To: La Roche University Community

From: Office of the President

Subject: University Update Regarding COVID-19

Date: March 18, 2020

Dear Campus Community:

As we continue to respond to the various impacts of the COVID-19 virus, I write with some important updates to the campus community. We are in uncharted waters as a university and nation. Every day brings new information. To guide our decision-making, we have relied on the counsel of local health officials, our own university experts, and colleagues at other universities.

At this time, we have no confirmed cases of the coronavirus on our campus. We will continue to update you on any suspected or confirmed cases. Given the rate of infections, we have mandated various forms of social distancing to help curb the spread of the virus. These include canceling meetings and events, arranging for work from home, and moving to virtual learning.

Spring semester classes: We recently announced that we would modify courses to be delivered in an online or alternative format, beginning March 23rd. While our hope was that we could return to face-to-face classes on April 13th, the latest information makes that highly unlikely. **As such, La Roche has decided to extend the delivery of courses in an online format or alternative method through the remainder of the semester, including finals week.**

To assist the transition, the Provost has designated the week of March 16th as instructional preparation time for faculty and students so that we can be successful when classes resume fully online on March 23rd. Depending on the course, students may be asked to get technology ready at home, download particular software, review educational materials, and prepare introductory assignments. Students, please continue to regularly monitor communications from your professors.

Because many students have limited access to computers and Wi-Fi, Wright Library will remain open with revised hours for students, staff and faculty. The library is closed to the community at large. A limited number of computers will be available. Library services will be limited. Please notify the library staff when you arrive so that a computer station can be appropriately disinfected before and after each use. Hours of operation (subject to change):

Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 1 to 9 p.m.

In addition, campus computer labs will be made available for students to use on an as-needed basis. Please check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for details.

Residential students: With the decision to offer online instruction through the end of the academic year, **we have decided to close the residence halls for the spring semester, with limited exceptions.** We are aware that some students have extraordinary circumstances, including some international students, that require them to remain in on-campus housing. Certain exceptions will be granted. We will continue to provide essential services, including meals as well as medical care through UPMC Urgent Care. The Redhawk Café will be open from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. daily for limited take out service.

Students must be moved out of their rooms by Friday, March 27th. Residence halls will be open daily for moving out between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., including Saturday and Sunday. If you should need to make other arrangements, please call Residence Life at 412-536-1195. Students who will be moving out, or have moved out already, will receive forms from Residence Life to complete. We ask that all students complete the check-out process by Friday, March 27th.

Please refer to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for details **on how to collect or forward your mail before leaving campus.**

Spring semester room and board fees: With the move to online classes and closure of the residence halls, many students will not be living on campus. The University's intention is to credit your account appropriately to reflect this change. These calculations are not straightforward. Room and board expense is already partially included in your resident student scholarship, meaning you already do not pay the full amount of the actual charge. Continuing resident students who vacate the residence halls by March 27th should expect to receive a prorated credit on their student accounts. For those who received financial aid, it is not yet clear whether credits for room and board will affect financial aid eligibility. Institutions are currently being encouraged to wait for further guidance from the Department of Education before making any changes to aid eligibility based on cost of attendance. We request students' patience as Student Accounts and the Office of Financial Aid work to process and communicate the impact of prorated reimbursements on students' aid packages. Graduating seniors: once this financial aid analysis is completed, if you are due a refund, we will send one to you.

Campus offices: Offices on campus are staffed on a limited basis, but many staff are available via email, and services are available through virtual means like Zoom or WCONLINE for offices including Tutoring and Student Support, Student Academic Support Services, Career Development, and Counseling and Health Services, among others. **Please call ahead before coming to campus, or reach out to support staff via email.** Contact information can be found in the [online directory](#).

Commencement: In keeping with the national and state directives about the size of group gatherings, it is obvious that we will not be able to bring our community together on May 9th to celebrate commencement. While we feel the need to postpone the commencement ceremony, we want to assure our graduating seniors, graduate students, and their families and friends that we will reschedule the ceremony as well as many of the special events that surround it, such as Baccalaureate Mass and the Graduate Awards Brunch. I know this is a huge disappointment to our graduating students who have earned the right to receive their diploma in front of family and friends. We are committed to make that happen once it is safe to do so.

Events: All La Roche-sponsored events are canceled or postponed until further notice.

Athletics: All 2020 spring sports seasons have been canceled for the remainder of the semester. This includes women's bowling, men's and women's lacrosse, men's golf, softball and baseball.

Guidance to Employees: Flexible work arrangements are already in effect. Please discuss your work arrangements with your supervisor as soon as possible if you have not already done so. As communicated, we will make every effort to ensure all University employees continue to receive their salary and benefits.

Questions or Concerns: If you have questions or concerns, please consult our [COVID-19 website](#) and the link for [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Let me close on a note of gratitude to our faculty, staff, and students who have so generously, patiently, and creatively responded to the demands in this unprecedented moment in our nation's history. In all we do, we strive to balance maintaining our academic mission as a university with caring for the well-being of our community. These decisions are not easy, and I realize how particularly challenging these times are for our graduating students who imagined a very different conclusion to their time at La Roche.

Please take care of yourself and your families.

Blessings,

Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D.
President