



CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS: From UAS Chancellor Rick Caulfield

March 19, 2020

Dear UAS community:

As you well know, the spread of the COVID-19 virus is requiring unprecedented actions throughout Alaska and the United States. In the University of Alaska system, President Johnsen provided guidance last week about precautions needed to help prevent further spread of the disease. These included extending Spring Break by a week and shifting most face-to-face classes to alternate delivery methods (online, audio, Zoom, or web conferencing). Students living in campus housing were asked to return home unless they receive an extension or an exception based on specific criteria. UA staff who traveled out of state over Spring Break (myself included), are asked to self-quarantine for 14 days; as a result, I'm working from home for the time being. Moreover, the guidance now calls for canceling all events and gatherings of 25 people or more. Regrettably, this will include cancelling our campus commencement activities for Spring 2020. You can find more details about these actions on the UA system's COVID-19 website:

alaska.edu/coronavirus19

Needless to say, these actions create a high degree of uncertainty and anxiety for all. UAS leadership has been meeting daily with UA Statewide leaders and we have also implemented our UAS Incident Command System to ensure that we are doing all we can to keep our community healthy. While I know that we are taxing our students, faculty, and staff with these changes and extra responsibilities, I'm very impressed by how all have responded. Our students have expressed understanding for the need to leave housing and shift to classes offered in new ways. Faculty, including especially those who've not taught online, have stepped up and taken advantage of resources and advice from colleagues about how to make this transition quickly. Staff are doing their best to maintain excellent core services in support of our ongoing educational mission. I'm very grateful to all for your continuing dedication to excellence in serving our students in these difficult times.

As we continue to face this challenge, we will do our best to keep you informed about the progress we are making and other changes that may be required at our three campuses. I encourage you to check back at the website above for FAQs which are designed to respond to common questions. We will do our best to keep them up-to-date so that you have the best available information.

For most, the global challenge of COVID-19 is unlike any that they've experienced in their lifetime. This is a trying time for all at UAS, and for our families and friends. That said, I'm confident that with these measures we will see our way through this pandemic to a more stable and healthy environment. All of us have a role to play in making that a reality—by washing our hands vigorously and often, cleaning the areas in which we live and work, keeping social distance, and following the guidance of public health and medical professionals. I encourage you to take care of yourself, your families, and those around you. And thank you for your continuing support for our mission of student learning and student success.