

From: [President Mark S. Schlissel](#)
To: hjablon@umich.edu
Subject: Extension of 'Stay Home, Stay Safe' order and an update on U-M's future plans
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 4:40:08 PM

To All Members of the U-M Community:

On Friday, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer extended and modified the State of Michigan's "[Stay Home, Stay Safe](#)" order through May 15. We're still working through some of the details, but I want to share as much as I can to help us all manage the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic.

Much of what we are already doing will not change. This includes the guidance that all employees who can work from home must continue to do so.

Aligning with the governor's public health-informed preparations to re-engage sectors of the economy, we have been preparing to begin ramping up some of our activities. Units across the university have been developing plans to safely resume on-campus work when that becomes possible.

For example, we are evaluating how specific parts of the order affect us, including when and where employees need to wear face coverings.

Our work to prepare for resumption of activity has been closely informed by our medical and public health experts. As [I shared last Monday in a message](#) to all faculty and staff, we will seek and implement the best guidance possible for the health and safety of our students and employees when we begin to reactivate the campus. We're considering a multitude of factors, including office, lab and classroom density; personal protective equipment needs and availability; and testing capacity.

Activities like experimental lab research and studio-based research may be the first to resume some in-person work because unlike some other research work it is not possible to do remotely. Additionally, nearly all work at the university will be very different in the months to come. Our Office of the Vice President for Research is coordinating with schools and colleges to assess how our important research enterprise can ramp up safely.

This crisis has reinforced to all that university research is crucial for our society. Work focused on the COVID-19 pandemic has continued during the pandemic, and a large amount of other critical research is taking place remotely. Research manuscripts and grant proposals are being written and submitted.

We're now much more accustomed to changes in our daily lives that promote health and safety. There's tape on the floors of our grocery stores indicating direction through aisles and social distancing at registers. Employees control the number of people allowed in various spaces, and plastic screens are providing safety barriers for workers who interact with the public. These are the types of new realities we may need to implement on our campuses.

Reopening of our campuses will happen gradually as health and safety conditions allow. None of the data and guidance we've seen so far suggest that we'll be able to fully resume activities overnight when the Stay Home, Stay Safe order expires.

Your continued patience and resilience are much appreciated as we continue to deal with this evolving pandemic. Even as we develop plans for resuming activity, we continue to face [financial challenges](#) on our three campuses and at Michigan Medicine. Additional updates from Michigan Medicine are planned for later this week. As questions have come in about the university's current financial situation, we've continued to update our [frequently asked questions](#).

Update on planning for fall semester

I remain cautiously optimistic that we will be able to deliver a public health-informed fall semester on our three campuses, with as much in-person instruction as possible. Until we have more information, we won't know how this will look. I will share any decisions we make as soon as I can.

Planning efforts are already underway. The Office of the Provost is launching a coordinated set of committees including faculty and staff across campus to focus on Ann Arbor's fall semester academic planning, including classes.

These committees will partner with Student Life and other areas as needed, and their scope will be comprehensive. Issues they will consider include the many types of instruction that take place at U-M, co-curricular activities and engaged learning, and the resources available from our Center for Academic Innovation, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, and Information and Technology Services. Details on this work will be shared later.

Michigan innovation at work

With most of us continuing to work and learn from home, I want to share a new effort to bring us together from U-M's Institute for the Humanities. The institute's new livestreaming video series, "House Calls: Virtual Studio Visits with Michigan Artists in a Pandemic," is bringing 10 artists across the state to the public via video chat.

As institute director and member of our [Arts Initiative](#) working group Peggy McCracken said, "the arts and humanities can offer human connection in this time of isolation and uncertainty. ... With 'House Calls,' we've commissioned Michigan artists to speak with us about how they are coping with and responding to our newly configured world."

More details and information on how to participate are [available from Michigan News](#).

I also invite everyone on May 2 to check out the variety of celebratory messages and special content we are sharing to honor our graduating Class of 2020. We continue to work with graduates to schedule an in-person commencement ceremony when we can do it safely, but this Saturday's content will be shared on our [main commencement page](#).

I again express my deep appreciation to the thousands of students, faculty and staff who demonstrate every day what a special university we are, through your work, service and resilience.

Thank you all for your dedication to the University of Michigan. Stay well, and I look forward to seeing you again when it's safe to do so.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.
President

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