

To All Students, Faculty and Staff:

Spring Break begins this coming Monday, March 16, and today we announce that any class that is not fully online will be suspended for the following week as well - a decision we arrived at in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and our Board of Trustees. As messaged earlier today, Worcester State University is fully open through the end of this week, with classes taking place.

Spring Break and Class Suspension

Classes will resume on Monday, March 30. We are using the next two weeks to plan for resuming them in a way that maximizes distance learning delivery modes. As of today, I do not foresee the closure of our campus for the semester, as some other universities have done. That said, I point out that the COVID-19 public health crisis -- which has now been deemed a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) -- is fluid and rapidly changing, which means that our response to it could change over time. I urge everyone to pay close attention to Worcester State University emails from various senders that will contain important and necessary information in the coming weeks. All communications will be posted to the Worcester State COVID-19 website, devoted to the topic, which is: <https://www.worcester.edu/Public-Health-Information/>

Over that two-week class suspension period, the university will be developing plans for resuming coursework and building in flexibility for the remainder of the semester. I look forward to working with our faculty and administration on determining how best to deliver course materials to our students while preserving academic integrity.

We understand that there will be concerns about lab courses and projects, and we are actively considering options. Internships, practica, student teaching will continue based on the schedule of the placement organization/entity/school.

Fully online courses will not be impacted by the class suspension.

Student Housing

Students living on campus will be receiving a message shortly from Residence Life. Those who traditionally leave for Spring Break are asked to take their personal items and necessities with them.

University to Remain Open During Class Suspension

The university campus will remain open for faculty and staff to work on campus. More information will be forthcoming from Human Resources. I recognize that the responsibilities of our clerical, trades, and maintenance staff may require a different approach than the one taken with other employees. **As always if you are sick, you should stay home.**

Sports and Athletics

Out of an abundance of caution, and in the best interests of our student-athletes, effective Thursday, March 12 and lasting through Monday, March 30, the MASCAC will suspend conference athletic activities, including all athletic events, team meetings, practices and contests, on or off campus, except for those teams currently competing out of state. The

situation is being actively monitored and will be reassessed over the next two weeks to determine if further action is warranted.

Protecting the Health of Our Community

The health and safety of the Worcester State community is our first priority. To protect the health of all within the university campus and the larger community, we will limit public gatherings on campus to no more than 50 persons. We will also engage in enhanced campus cleaning procedures during the two-week class suspension. More details will follow.

Sincerely,

Barry M. Maloney

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President