



Student Government Resolution 119.020

A Resolution Encouraging Faculty to Continue to Work with Students in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak and Related Academic Student Concerns

Sponsored by Maddie Meyer and Josh German, Academic Affairs Committee Co-Chairs, Paul Wuennenberg Jr., Nick Nguyen, Victor Wei, and Joshna Karki, Academic Affairs Committee Members

WHEREAS,

- The Student Government is the official governing body of the Student Association and exists to represent the present and long term best interest of the Student Association in the formulation of the University policy and in the fulfillment of the University mission; and
- Following the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the state of Missouri on March 7, universities across the state have suspended in-person classes; and
- Truman State University has suspended in-person classes for the remainder of the semester as of March 16; and
- A week of preparation and planning designated for March 16-20 was ordered by the president's office to “afford University leadership and academic departments the opportunity to explore a plan to complete the semester through alternative instructional methods should the need arise;” and
- This was confirmed by the March 16 email sent by the president's office, “As was indicated in the March 11 email, this week was designed to be a week of transition. There will be no penalties for missed connections, assignments, tests or quizzes;” and
- Truman students are facing additional challenges as a result of this transition; such as
 - Connectivity and communication issues, including:
 - Receiving more emails from professors than at any other point in the semester; and
 - Accessing reliable internet connection for online commitments given limited access to broadband for low-income students and students in rural environments; and
 - Places normally offering free public wifi are closed for public safety; and
 - Unprecedented academic challenges, including:
 - Having a sudden, larger workload; and
 - Lacking the materials they need to be successful in their classes; and
 - Professors and students being not being adequately prepared for the transition to online coursework; and
 - Having to redo assignments because of unforeseen circumstances; and
 - Professors altering the time and duration of web lectures; and
 - Learning environment challenges, including:

- Losing the neutral work environments many students relied upon to complete the assignments of their heavy workload; and
- Creating entirely new schedules to balance their new school, home, and work life; and
- Being removed from support they rely on such as study groups and tutoring; and
- Personal life stressors related to present circumstances and the academic transition; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT,

- Supports the decision of the university to move courses online for the remainder of the semester to protect all members of the Truman State University community; and
- Recognizes the various issues students are struggling with; and
- Greatly appreciates and recognizes the efforts faculty is making to ensure the mental wellness of their students; and
- Looks forward to the positive impact the impending policy change that would allow students to drop classes until the end of the semester, take any course credit-no credit pass/fail; and
- Appreciates the work of faculty in adapting classes to keep students' education on track; and
- Recognizes the limited ability of the Student Government to issue recommendations concerning the wide range of difficulties the university is facing at this time; and
- Recognizes the abnormality of the situation for all members of the Truman and Kirksville community; and
- Respectfully requests that faculty seek the student perspective in their individual classes to influence decision-making moving forward; and
- Respectfully requests that faculty provide materials in a timeframe that allows for students to complete assignments by their deadlines; and
- Asks that department chairs forward this resolution to their respective faculty members to pass along these student concerns to be mindful of; and
- Respectfully requests that faculty and students both be accommodating to the new issues and concerns that have arisen due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT DIRECTS THAT:

Additional copies of this resolution be disseminated to President Dr. Sue Thomas; Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost Dr. Janet Gooch; Vice President of Student Affairs Janna Stoskopf; Faculty Senate; The Undergraduate Council; All Academic Department Chairs; Truman Media Network, and the University Archives.

Passed 10-1-3, March 22, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deanna Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Deanna Schmidt, President of the Student Association.

“Dear Members of the Truman Community:

As you are aware, our University has been closely monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak for some time. With the continued, rapidly changing landscape of the outbreak and our primary focus on the health, safety, and well-being of everyone on our campus, the COVID-19 Response Team* determined today that we are suspending in-person classes for the week of March 15-21.

Students are not to return to campus during this week. Those students who have an extreme extenuating circumstance that necessitates returning to their on-campus housing should contact the Residence Life Office through this [form](#).

Since we are currently on spring break, this additional week will give everyone who traveled time to self-evaluate, assess their probability of exposure, and take appropriate precautions (<https://trualert.truman.edu> provides recommendations). It will also give University leadership and academic departments the opportunity to explore alternative instructional methods, should the need arise.

While in-person classes will not be conducted, this is not an extension of spring break. Students are encouraged to continue their coursework, if possible, and faculty members will contact their classes via email, Blackboard or other communication methods to provide details on their academic expectations.

Truman will remain open. All faculty and staff should plan to continue their normal work schedules. University offices will continue to be staffed and faculty members will be instructed by their academic departments on how to proceed during the week. Staff and faculty who have any concerns about their work schedules should talk with their supervisors. **Please note, Pickler Memorial Library, the Student Recreation Center, and Pershing Arena will not be open.**

Students who work on-campus will not be expected to work. Supervisors will work with local students to determine if there is both a willingness from the student and a need from the University for the student to work.

In general, events for next week have been cancelled. Individual appointments, visits, or meetings are encouraged to be conducted by phone/virtual meetings if possible, but may still occur.

At this time, the University does not have any cases of coronavirus, and the general student population is not among those known to be at a high risk for complications from the virus. **Truman does not have any students studying abroad in CDC high-risk countries,** and no current students from high-risk areas returned to their countries of origin during spring break and then returned to campus.

This uncertain and rapidly changing landscape results in anxious moments for all of us. Please be mindful of your own physical and mental wellness and the wellness of others. That's what Bulldogs do. Please be sensitive to the fact that members of our community may respond differently to this challenging situation. For example, some may choose to wear masks as a sign of respect for the health of others and/or as a precaution for their own health. As a community that values diversity and inclusion, we must respect one another.

For the most up-to-date information and regular updates, keep an eye on your email and check the <https://trualert.truman.edu> website. We are a smart and compassionate community and we will get through this together.

Be well,

Sue

Susan L. Thomas
President

*President, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, Executive Director of Human Resources, Director of Public Safety (Police Chief), Director of Public Relations, Director of Physical Plant/Safety Manager”

“Dear Truman Community:

As we work together to understand our new and evolving reality, we are challenged to exhibit patience and grace in the midst of uncertainty and a rapidly changing landscape. Anxiety, frustration and disappointment about what could have been (had the pandemic not happened), what is (the current reality), and what is to be (unknown) have put everyone on edge. Our community is so fortunate that even in the face of their own challenges, wonderful faculty, staff, and students have embraced the true meaning of community and have reached out to help others overcome their challenges. For example, Student Government is working to purchase packing materials to make the move-out process a bit easier for their fellow students.

Speaking of the move-out process, as promised in the March 16 email, we have details to share about the following (please go to <https://trualert.truman.edu> for full details, related FAQs, tips for supporting learning and working remotely, and to initiate required processes):

1. **Student check-in survey** – To check in with our students and determine what assistance they need; all students are asked to complete this brief [survey](#).
2. **Students returning to campus** – For the health and safety of our community, students should not return to their residence hall rooms to live for the remainder of the spring semester unless they have no other viable living arrangements. Arrangements have been made for students to move out of the residence halls between March 23-30. Specific details regarding the process will be sent to all on-campus residents. Students will receive prorated credits for housing and meals. Specific information about the prorated credits to student accounts will be communicated at a later time.
3. **Food service** – *Only* takeout meals will be provided beginning March 21. Meals will be restricted to those who reside in the residence halls who have meal plans. There will be no retail sales.
4. **Student services** – *All* in-person student services, except for the Student Health Center, are suspended for the rest of the spring semester, as are in-person meetings with faculty and staff and the use of labs and studios. All in-person student services that have been suspended will be offered in alternative delivery formats.
5. **Scholarship, work study, and institutional pay jobs** – Students with scholarship hour obligations will retain their full scholarship funding and will not be required to fulfill any more hours this semester. Students who have a federal work-study job will be compensated for the remainder of the semester based on the number of hours they were projected to work. Students working for the University and receiving institutional pay who would like to continue their employment should contact their supervisors.
6. **Expanded leave options and working remotely** – Policies have been updated and expanded to support employees affected by school and daycare closures; employees who are ill; healthy, quarantined employees; and employees who need to work remotely. Information about how

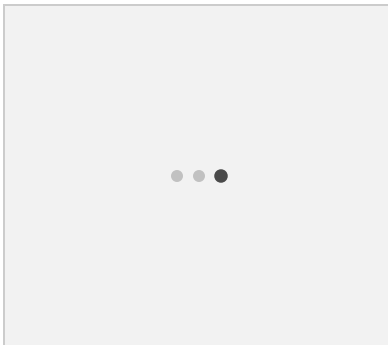
the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to begin April 2, 2020 impacts our leave policies will be provided by the end of March.

7. **Commencement ceremony** – A decision regarding commencement will be made by March 31. There will be no delay in the conferral of degrees, even if the commencement ceremony is postponed.

Even with all of the changes that have been made, it is important to remember that our University is open; we are not ceasing operations and we are working as hard as we can to effectively fulfill our mission. In the coming days as we continue to respond to emerging situations, we will also be providing additional virtual resources for faculty, staff and students to support learning and physical and mental wellness. Be sure to check <https://trualert.truman.edu> for the most up-to-date information.

In times like this, it is easy to feel out of control. While there are many things we cannot control about this pandemic, there are many decisions we can make to take control of our destiny. As we adjust to our new reality, we must think about how we can work together to ensure Truman comes out the other side strong and resolute and ready to achieve our goals.

Be well,
Sue



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