



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Dear CUNY staff and faculty,

As we prepare to open another week amid the extraordinary circumstances posed by the coronavirus crisis, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your professionalism, and for your commitment to CUNY and its mission. Your stability and solidarity, even in these times of uncertainty, have made it possible to do the work needed to chart a course forward for the University.

I was humbled by your composure last week and this weekend in the face of the news that our offices and campuses were touched by the outbreak. I know that you are concerned for your own health and that of your loved ones, and I share these concerns with you. I understand that the sustained climate of anxiety we all must endure can weigh heavily on our minds. Yet, we have continued to do our part in ensuring the maintenance of our academic and business operations. The sense of mission and urgency was CUNY at its best; thank you.

Faculty, staff, students and administrators across the University have been hard at work, preparing for our upcoming transition to distance learning modalities. Last week, we also distributed guidelines for [flexible work arrangements](#), and we advised all college presidents and provosts to swiftly enact these accommodations where possible. The goal will be to run our campuses under the distance learning modality with as few employees on campus as possible.

As advised in a CUNY Alert earlier this evening, only those who have been designated as essential staff need report to work on Monday, March 16, to their campuses and CUNY Central, beginning a transition to distance working for all non-essential staff. Essential staff have already been designated; however, if staff have any questions, please contact your supervisor. Please note that telecommuting is only possible with the approval of your supervisor. School presidents and deans can decide at their discretion what facilities in their campuses, such as libraries and laboratories, are essential. Dorms and food pantries will remain open.

Further, I have instructed all campuses and CUNY Central to finish their telecommuting plans as soon as possible. All supervisors should finalize establishing the structures and channels that will enable employees to do their jobs remotely, and to ensure that all hardware and software is fully functional. Supervisors should implement remote check-in plans, and all employees should be receiving details about their work schedules and other expectations of job performance for the duration of this arrangement.

These telecommuting plans should be fully activated no later Wednesday, March 18, but I have encouraged all campuses and supervisors who are ready to implement earlier to not wait until then; the sooner, the better.

Managers of CUNY staff who are not able to remotely perform all of their job duties should look for ways to minimize everyone's potential exposure, including: where possible, combining remote and on-premises work; staggering schedules to enable employees to use public transit during off-peak times; implementing staffing rotations; condensing work weeks, with more hours but fewer days as during the summer; and, for those who are working on-site, utilizing stringent social-distance strategies.

Please be assured that I, along with my senior leadership, have been aggressively evaluating our policies and developing new protocols and processes to safeguard your health and wellbeing while we all work together to

maintain CUNY's essential services. As we continue to respond to the ever-changing developments of this pandemic, we will keep you apprised.

We are undeniably living and working in unprecedented circumstances, but it is not the first time that CUNY has wrestled with dire times. We navigated Superstorm Sandy, the September 11 attacks and other events that presented innumerable but not insurmountable challenges. Each time, we pitched in, pulled through and emerged stronger, and I have no doubt that this will again be the case. I have never been more proud to be a part of a community that is driven by a common, laudable vision.

Together, we are honoring this University's promise to provide equal access and opportunity for all, no matter the circumstances.

Thank you for your patience and hard work.

Sincerely,

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