



TO: Students, Faculty, Staff, Parents & Friends

FOR OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, OTTAWA, KANSAS CAMPUS ONLY

FROM: President Reggies Wenyika

RE: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update - Ottawa University, Ottawa, Kansas Campus Update**

DATE: 3/14/2020

How quickly things change in a matter of 24 hours!

As you know, the university has been working and following closely the guidance of the Franklin County Health Department in regard to the risk that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) poses to our students and university community. In our last communication just one day ago, we laid out our plan to limit the disruption of services to our students, while taking proactive and preventative steps to mitigate the risk that COVID-19 presents. The announcement was based on the best available information at the time and subject always to the preemption of local health authorities and unfolding events and new information.

Unfortunately, Just this morning, we were notified that a presumptive case of Covid19 has been identified in Franklin County.

This morning, the Franklin County Health Officer and the Emergency Management Coordinator, following a declaration of a State of Local Disaster, issued a directive to all Franklin County Schools to suspend normal classroom instruction and K-12 extracurricular activities for two weeks. After a conversation with the local health officials, we have decided to move all campus instruction for the Ottawa campus to the distance-education format until March 30, 2020. At the end of two weeks, public health and university officials will collaborate and reevaluate the situation at that time and notify all parties of next steps.

So, what does this mean for Ottawa University, Kansas, students, faculty, staff and parents of students matriculating on this OU campus?

Faculty and staff will continue to execute their duties as assigned as **the campus remains open**. However, alternative teaching modalities will be instituted effective when classes begin again on Monday, March 23rd, following the return of our residential students after spring break. The system will be very convenient. All students will be provided a phone number and directed to call into their classroom at their normally scheduled time. Most courses will be held in a conference-call environment. Additional information regarding classes will be provided to both faculty and students during the coming days. Please note that the dorms and on campus dining facilities will remain open and operational. All students residing on campus will continue to enjoy campus amenities but will be expected to comply with certain restrictions and precautionary measures issued by the university to ensure their protection and that of our surrounding community.

FOR ALL STUDENTS RETURNING FOLLOWING SPRING BREAK: The university is anticipating that it will remain open for business and encourages all students to return to campus. Note that at our invitation, many students have chosen simply to spend their spring break living on campus. After spring break and when students return, required screening systems will be in place to provide yet one more level of assurance against the potential spread or exposure to the virus. We have been working on those protocols for some time and more specific information will be provided in the coming days. Please know that OUKS will continue to work diligently and effectively with students, faculty, and the community Health Department to ensure students will be able to complete their school work and remain as safe and protected as possible. We ask that all students check their university-issued email for specific instructions concerning their ongoing classes and the shift to distance modality.

In the most recent communique, we advised that OU athletic competitions and some related team athletic activities have been cancelled until further notice, pending the direction of the NAIA and the KCAC athletic conference. Also, we are actively limiting larger group interactions to provide yet one more method to help defeat the possible spread of the Coronavirus. All events and large gatherings having 100 or more attendees have been or will be cancelled or postponed. Additionally, as noted above, we will provide ongoing health screening as needed and for any faculty or staff who would like to avail themselves of same for their own purposes..

The university has set up the following contacts for anyone needing additional information:

- For students and parents, questions related to the university's response and emergency plans regarding the COVID-19 should be directed to the Student Affairs Office at (785) 229-1001 or by email at studentaffairs@ottawa.edu.
- Also, interested parties are invited to visit our website at www.ottawa.edu/coronavirus for more detailed information.

We realize the inconvenience that these measures may cause and like all of you, truly regret the need for them. However, given the ongoing developments in this environment, we all appreciate their necessity. The university continues to be focused on the wellbeing of our students, faculty

and staff, and remind everyone to maintain vigilance with the following preventative common steps:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face and cover your face when coughing or sneezing.
- Refrain from personal contact with other people.
- Socially distance yourself from large gatherings of people.
- Utilize disinfectant products on common surfaces if you have to be out (e.g., grocery cart).
- Utilize hand sanitizers when hand washing with soap is unavailable.

Your support and prayers are appreciated.