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Monday, March 30, 2020 - University Update

MSU Faculty and Staff:

Our University continues to do a great job as we complete the first week of transition to online instruction and modified schedules. Thank you for what each of you are doing. As we modify and continually adjust operations in a number of areas, the following is a listing of University updates and guidance. We are trying to keep as many of our announcements in one document to reduce the volume of emails. To date, we have a significant amount of our employees working remotely, on flexible arrangements, and in various staggered shifts. As we continue this process, our attempt is to remain alongside the guidance of Governor Beshear, suggestions from public health agencies, and for the overall good of MSU.

From today until Wednesday, April 1 we will continue operations as we currently are with two main goals:

- 1). Continue to transition the remaining few students out of campus housing in a safe and orderly way and then position the ones who must remain in select areas. We are down to a minimum presently.
 - 2). Allow employees to finish any necessary/urgent work before we move into more modified operations noted below. This will also allow us to process a variety of month end transactions and payments for the month of March, including payroll on a normal schedule.
- Operational Hours and Employee Categories Effective Wednesday, April 1 Until Wednesday, April 15 (or until further notice if circumstances change):

We will be operating with the following hours below, and establishing three categories of employees to help us going forward:

Category I: Employees Needed for Emergency or Critical Services

Employees in this category have been identified and will be communicated with by their Vice President. This encompasses employees who perform critical functions, emergency operations, support the life/safety of people or animals and those who need to be consistently on-site for specific reasons.

Some of these employees will be working modified schedules on campus as determined by their Vice President. Schedules for these employees may be different than any other category based on their function.

Category II: Essential Employees – Core Functions

Employees in this category are needed to ensure that core business, operational, and maintenance functions are continued, but with limitations. Category II will be a mix of on-campus and/or remote work determined by their supervisor and approved by their Vice President or direct Presidential report. The University should continue to have business operations available Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. via direct phone access or online to meet student and general business needs. Employees should also make every effort to serve students and complete work assignments during all parts of the day if working remotely.

Employees in this category have been identified and will be communicated with by their Vice President or direct Presidential report.

Category III: All Other MSU Employees Should Remain at Home and Work Remotely

Effective Wednesday, April 1 all other employees not identified and/or notified above are requested to plan to work from home.

Operational hours while working remotely from home will remain: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. so that our students and others have a set window of time that they can expect to reach someone by phone or get a quick response. Employees should also make every effort to serve students and complete work assignments during all parts of the day.

Your Vice President or direct Presidential report will continue to guide you on further remote work. We also ask that you remain flexible, as there may be circumstances or needs during this time to which employees in this Category may be called upon to assist in limited ways on campus.

We understand remote work will be difficult for some units to accomplish, but during this time we feel that it is best to operate in this manner. Our goal would be to work with units/individuals as our campus returns to normal in the future on how to make up work and/or a backlog of items. We hope you understand and will remain flexible in this manner if your position does not allow for reasonable remote work.

- Employee Compensation and Benefits:

All full-time employees will remain compensated and retain access to their health insurance during this window of time. All part-time employees will continually be evaluated for essential or non-essential needs by a Vice President, just as we normally do.

The U.S. Department of Labor and other agencies have provided additional options for employees for expansion of sick leave and FMLA. Additional communications specifically related to this will be sent via email soon.

- Time Entry Reporting:

We know that employees are keeping communications and business flowing as much as possible during the course of any given day. Having said that, all full time employees who are salaried should continue to work as directed, and should take vacation or sick time as appropriate and to your ethical determination. Hourly based employees should enter either 7.5 or 8 hours on your time cards so that you receive full pay. If hourly employees are sick or take vacation time, we would ask that you use your ethical determination for that as well and report it as accurately as possible. If a sick or vacation day is used, please enter the time you were sick or on vacation. Part time employees are to enter actual hours worked per day.

- St. Claire HealthCare Update:

As you may have seen announced, St. Claire HealthCare has been modifying their operations to meet the challenges and to make preparations for our recent health issue at hand. MSU has offered St. Claire the use of the CHER building as a backup location in case they should need it, along with offering the use of our nursing beds and some equipment. Recently, St. Claire announced that they will be modifying the employment status of their workforce in order to meet some of the financial challenges of not being able to regularly conduct elective procedures and other select procedures until this health issue is behind us. In speaking with St. Claire leadership they have indicated that this should not affect the availability of a provider for you if you utilize them for healthcare. St. Claire continues to see many patients for routine care using virtual visits. Very soon they will be offering drive up services at the pavilion for anyone without internet access. Anyone needing urgent services will be seen in person as before and any test or procedures are still available for care of an emergency or urgent nature. Please continue to utilize St. Claire for your healthcare needs and to support their providers in a spirit of community cooperation and care.

- Main Campus and Other MSU Property Access:

Employees who are not in Category I or II above are free to access buildings to retrieve items or materials they may need or to do necessary business, but are encouraged to not remain on campus for any length of time.

Non-employees should not be allowed into any building unless assisting an employee.

Other than MSU Housing Office approved students being allowed to remain in residence halls, no students should be allowed on campus unless approved by a Vice President.

Until further guidance by public health officials, Eagle Trace Golf Course will remain open for limited play by the public, but the course has restrictions that players must walk and use other distancing precautions.

- University Post Office:

In order for essential employees to keep core functions operational, we will open the University Post Office from 9:00 a.m. - noon each day so individuals can retrieve critical mail, receive and mail bills, and to send items of necessity. For the time being, our mail may also run a day or two behind, both incoming and outgoing. The Post Office will remain closed to non-employees and the general public.

- MSU Counseling and Health Services:

Counseling and Health Services will be open from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. In accordance with directives from the Governor and state licensing boards, CHS will not provide in-person care/services for routine appointments. The Clinic will remain open during operating hours for crisis appointments and emergency consultations only. Students needing care are advised to call the clinic in advance (606) 783-2055 for consultation. CHS will schedule an in-person appointment if deemed necessary by the healthcare provider, and non-crisis mental health counseling is transitioning to tele-mental health appointments. There will be mental health staff available (on-call) for emergency situations, especially for our students remaining in the residence halls. Employees are encouraged to contact their primary care provider for their healthcare needs.

- Students Remaining in Residence Halls:

We do have 30-40 students who are remaining in our residence halls because they are international or do not have other housing options at this time. Presently, Housing staff are working on plans of where to place them strategically. If you would like to do anything for these students, please let Russ Mast, Jane Tenyer, or Shannon Colvin know. Some student affairs, housing, and other affiliated staff may be needed to assist with student transition in the residence halls on an on-going basis. Those individuals who may be needed in this area will receive special instructions from your Vice President or direct Presidential report.

- Use of University Funds:

Our financial staff, along with Vice Presidents and others, are beginning the process of drawing up funds from accounts across campus in order to make sure that we can establish a substantive enough reserve account to offset projected losses of revenue and other items between now and June 30, 2020. These individuals have started identifying funds from accounts which will be pooled centrally in an attempt to provide for necessary liquidity in case of prolong modified operations. We mention this so that you are aware of our efforts to conserve funds, but also so that you maintain a watch on any remaining funds left within accounts and do not overspend what may remain.

With any remaining funds in accounts, it is encouraged that unless the expenditure is to pay a current contract obligation, required or essential payment to maintain accreditation, support a core operation requirement, meet basic payroll, health, safety, and/or other required item, that units not spend at all for the time being. Likewise, MSU purchasing card limits are being lowered to add a further layer of protection during this time.

Restricted grants and projects from any externally funded contract may continue to operate without the above limitations and shall be subject to only the restrictions and parameters of the specific grant or funding partner. Purchasing cards for grant holders will not be changed and will continue in their normal limits.

University F&A funds that have been earned and distributed through our Indirect Cost Share Formula this current fiscal year will be temporarily suspended for use and drawn up centrally as well. We feel that this is needed to help support our overall finances. The one exception: we will be leaving the Principal Investigator Funds within the new formula intact for the P.I. to use. It is because of the efforts of the P.I. that these funds are available and we want to allow that to continue.

- Employee Resources:

Continue to visit www.moreheadstate.edu/coronavirus for additional information regarding MSU's updates and planning to support our Commonwealth's overall efforts in mitigating the risk of the novel coronavirus, a list of Frequently Asked Questions & Answers, and an ongoing list of event changes.

We also strongly encourage people of our community who have any specific questions related to the coronavirus, to please call the State COVID-19 Hotline at 800-722-5725, visit www.kycovid19.ky.gov or www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Going forward, all universities, and we are included, will be grappling with a degree of uncertainty as to how the short and long term ramifications of our current challenge will look ahead. Our key will be to challenge our University to be agile and our employees versatile. As we continue to stabilize more this week, we will begin strategically planning for some forwarding looking items, at least to the best of our ability.

Thank you for continuing to assist as we modify operations -- our continued goal is to take care of our students, continue to be as safe as possible for employees, and to assure that we are taking financially prudent steps in this unique time.

Since units are different, our Vice Presidents and direct Presidential reports will continue to guide each one to find their best fit. Please continue to take care of students and do make sure you take a little extra time to spend with your families and check on your neighbors.

We have weathered a number of storms and met each challenge. During this specific challenge I hope that everyone will continue to remain flexible, patient, and on one team.

If you have a moment, please watch this video that was developed by our University Advancement team – they did a great job. You may have to copy/paste the link into a browser.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D50a50bTnx0&t=4s>

Thank you for what each of you are doing to help meet and beat this challenge.

Jay Morgan
President