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To: All Faculty, Staff and Librarians

Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President and Provost  
From: Vivek Goel, Vice-President, Research and Innovation, and Strategic Initiatives  
Kelly Hannah-Moffat, Vice-President, Human Resources & Equity

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Date: March 13, 2020

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**Re: Update on COVID-19 and the University's response**

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Dear Colleagues,

This message is in follow-up to the [President's statement earlier today](#) about the COVID-19 pandemic. We are putting in place several new measures designed to slow the rate of infection and interrupt the chain of transmission for the whole community. These steps are without precedent and we are working to put in place the supports you need.

We will continue to carefully assess the global situation, consider the advice of public health authorities and the interests of our community, and update you with any changes. We want to assure you that our response is guided by the need to ensure the health of our community, and the continuity of our academic and business activities.

**University operations continue, and all three campuses will remain open** with the following measures in place:

### **Classes**

Starting on Monday, March 16 and continuing until April 3, all in-person undergraduate and research-stream Masters and Doctoral courses across U of T's three campuses are cancelled. Teaching will continue through other means (which may include existing online platforms). Every instructor should implement [their plan](#) to complete their courses by alternate modes. [The Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation \(CTSI\) has information to help instructors](#) with continuity planning, including a checklist and quick guide, as do many divisions.

This measure does not apply to professional programs. Decisions regarding these programs will be made by the Deans of each Faculty taking into consideration the specific requirements of individual programs as well as professional and accreditation bodies. Professional students as well as faculty members, other instructors and staff in these programs will be advised by Monday, March 16.

## Residences and Libraries

**Residences and libraries remain open.** We know that some students may be unable to return home and, for these students, it is important that they continue to have a welcoming place to live on our campuses during this unusual time. We are encouraging all students in residence who can go home and return easily for exams to do so.

## Research Operations

The University's research operations continue. Faculty members have a responsibility to maintain the operations of laboratory and research environments. If you would like assistance in conducting a health and safety assessment, please contact [Environmental Health and Safety](#).

## Teaching Assistants

All Teaching Assistants currently under contract will continue to receive their full pay. Their roles may need to be modified in response to the cancellation of in-person classes, in accordance with collective agreement provisions.

## Child Care Supports for Parents and Caregivers

The Ontario government is closing all publicly funded schools across the province for two weeks following March Break due to concerns about COVID-19. Many private schools are doing the same.

As of today, all three locations of the University's Early Learning Centre remain open. We will continue to consider the advice of public health authorities and will advise you as soon as possible of any changes.

## If You Are Sick or in Self-Isolation

At this time, **no employee is required to have a doctor's note** or medical certificate for cold or flu-related absences, or for self-isolation. Individuals who are not symptomatic for COVID-19 but meet the criteria for recommended self-isolation based on public health advice should work from home during this 14-day period. If symptoms of illness arise during self-isolation, please follow the sick leave procedures as outlined.

In order to track COVID-19 related absences as advised by public health, we request that **all faculty, staff and librarians who are absent due to flu-like symptoms** or are self-isolating complete the Employee Absence Self-Declaration form, available in the HR Service Centre and linked below:

- [Appointed Faculty & Staff and Librarians Employee Absence Self-Declaration form](#)
- [Non-Appointed Employee Absence Self-Declaration form](#)

Please continue to inform your Manager, Chair, or Division Head through normal processes if you will be absent due to illness, including cold or flu-related absences.

## **Telecommuting**

Employees who meet the criteria for recommended self-isolation based on public health advice should work from home during the 14-day period. We also recognize that many parents and caregivers may need to work from home while schools are closed to balance their child care needs. We ask Managers, Chairs, and Division Heads to be as flexible as possible when considering flex-time and telecommuting requests based on this need.

A [COVID-19 Temporary Special Telecommuting Work Arrangements Guideline](#) is available on the [HR & Equity website](#) as a resource for any employees who need to work from home. Information Technology Services (ITS) has also prepared [technical work-from-home resources](#) to support employees accessing work material while telecommuting.

We know this is a difficult time. Please know that supports continue to be available to you, including the University's [Employee & Family Assistance Program](#). If you have broader questions relating to COVID-19 and the University's planning, we encourage you to visit the [University's COVID-19 website](#).

We want to thank each of you for your continued commitment to the University, especially as we navigate our way through this difficult period. Please know that your efforts, dedication and hard work are appreciated.