

Dear faculty, staff, and students;

As this COVID-19 global health crisis continues to gain momentum in our nation and region, we have been actively engaged in identifying informed, thoughtful and proactive ways to maintain our focus on our number one objective-safeguarding the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff. In striving to do so, we have also remained committed to our guiding principle that policies and decisions in response to COVID-19 should be informed by and aligned with, local, state, and national medical authorities and public health experts, including guidance issued from the CDC and KDHE.

On Monday, we announced the decision to cancel on-campus classes through spring break as we work to transition all classes to online delivery for the remainder of the semester. We also asked students to leave the residence halls and return home by the end of the day on Tuesday, suspended all University events and travel, and reiterated the need for all to continue to follow CDC and KDHE guidance regarding social distancing and staying home if you are sick or otherwise considered at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Today, based on the latest guidance and developments, we are announcing additional steps to promote social distancing and minimize the potential spread of COVID-19 by transitioning to remote operations and limiting the on-campus presence of student workers, faculty, and staff.

### **Remote Work Plans**

Beginning today, university employees who are not already working from home will be asked to transition from working on campus to working remotely to the fullest extent possible. The transition will begin with a discussion between employees and their supervisors wherein a remote work plan will be established. Supervisors have the autonomy to make work arrangements that allow for as much work as possible to be completed off campus. Once a remote work plan is in place, employees may immediately transition to working remotely. Employees working remotely will be expected to continue to complete assigned duties and responsibilities using appropriate communication channels and technology. Please contact your supervisor to plan for any requests you might have in this area, supervisors will funnel requests to division heads.

Supervisors will be expected to take appropriate administrative, project management and technology-based communications steps that allow for the continuation of important meetings and discussions to ensure that team members remain engaged and involved in executing their duties and responsibilities and those of each department while working remotely.

### **Essential On Campus Personnel**

Supervisors will also be tasked with identifying “essential on campus personnel” among their teams. These will be employees whose presence on campus on a daily or recurring basis has been deemed essential to the continuing operations of the university. With the approval of a supervisor, select employees may also be approved to work on campus in a limited capacity. All

such employees will be expected to maintain social distancing and continue to follow the guidance of CDC and KDHE, which currently includes avoiding gatherings of 10 or more individuals and preserving social distancing of 6 feet between people .

### **Timing and Other Details**

This transition to remote operations begins immediately and will continue until further notice. While we would encourage employees who have worked out a plan with their supervisor to begin to work remotely as soon as possible, by **Friday, March 20, only essential on campus personnel should report for work on campus.**

The University will continue to pay all employees, including student employees, during this period of limited operations due to the COVID-19 situation. Special instructions concerning payments to student employees, and the reporting of time and leave during this period for all employees, are attached.

As stated previously, executive leadership will review and reassess the appropriateness of operating in this manner on a weekly basis. Employees and supervisors should be in regular contact during this time about work, productivity, problems experienced, and other questions or concerns. During this period of limited operations, all employees will continue to be subject to the terms of their employment appointments as well as KBOR and University rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. **Please remember that FHSU has strict policies regarding access to and the protection of sensitive information, including data protected by FERPA. Again, these policies still apply to remote work situations, and all such information should be protected from unauthorized access and disclosure.** Employees and supervisors are encouraged to have conversations about protecting sensitive information as part of their remote work planning.

Please continue to check our COVID-19 webpage for updates and resources, including the latest information on campus closures, previous communications and policy guidance, answers to FAQs, and additional tools and information.

I sincerely thank you, again, for your patience and commitment during this unprecedented time. I remain confident that we will work through this – together – and ultimately be a stronger University for it.

Kind Regards,

*Tisa*

Tisa Mason. Ed.D., CAE  
President  
Fort Hays State University