March 21, 2020

Dear Graduate Students,

This past week has been nearly as tumultuous as the previous week, as we all adjusted to new ways of working, communicating, and supporting one another. Today, in an effort to slow and reduce the spread of the coronavirus, New Jersey announced the implementation of a “stay at home” order beginning today, Saturday, March 21, at 9:00 p.m. As a result, we are taking additional steps to support the health and well-being of our community and our neighboring communities.

As the number of COVID-19 cases increase nationwide, we will not be immune. Now more than ever, we must work together to mitigate the spread of the disease. **We ask that you adhere strictly to the following restrictions:**

- All non-essential indoor gatherings of any size are prohibited; outdoor activities are only permitted if appropriate social distancing guidelines can be observed.
- Visitors to student living spaces are not allowed. While graduate students are able to remain in their on-campus housing, you may not invite others who are not registered occupants to stay in your housing. Students who need to add a family member (including a domestic partner) as an occupant in their unit, consistent with Housing policy, must email askhousing@princeton.edu immediately.
- All public health guidelines must be obeyed at all times, most especially regular handwashing and generous social distancing. Please refrain from touching your face, keep surfaces clean if you share a space with others, and eliminate or reduce the use of shared items.

Under the new state-wide order, you are still able to head outside to exercise or take a walk, and to access businesses that provide basic services, such as grocery stores, restaurants offering takeout, and pharmacies. On campus, Procter Hall, Building Services, University Health Services and other critical units will remain operational. We ask that you continue to practice social distancing in all settings, and to responsibly limit the amount of time you are away from your residence.

**We also write to let you know that all faculty must now proceed with shut-down procedures for all non-essential on-campus research activities.** Faculty with laboratories were asked earlier this week to submit Essential Operations Plans; these plans are currently under review by the Dean for Research. Only essential research (as approved by the Dean for Research) and critical maintenance tasks may continue. This means that almost all graduate students will forthwith be working exclusively remotely. A very small number are listed in the Essential Operations Plan; Dean Christine Murphy and others from the Graduate School will be reaching out individually to each such graduate student to ensure that they are entirely comfortable with this
arrangement. As always, Dean Murphy remains ready to support graduate students in the natural sciences and engineering, and Dean Geoffrey Hill is here for those in the humanities and social sciences.

For those of you who will now be working exclusively remotely, we remind you that any graduate student who chooses to vacate by March 30th can cancel their housing/dining contracts and receive a full refund as of their day of departure. Students who wish to pursue this option should email askhousing@princeton.edu or submit an Intent to Vacate via the Housing for Graduates Portal as quickly as possible. (Again, we appreciate that for many of you this is not an option, as you do not have another place you can reasonably go to; graduate students are not mandated to leave University Housing.)

We understand that the limitations and restrictions on many campus services and spaces will raise a number of practical questions for you as you learn to navigate life on campus in the weeks ahead. Faculty are preparing to begin online instruction next week, and staff in the Graduate School, Campus Life, Housing, Dining, and Public Safety are working equally hard to maintain services for those of you who remain on campus. While the campus may feel rather empty, we assure you that the staff in the Graduate School and Campus Life are available remotely and stand ready to assist you. Although these circumstances mean we must be physically apart, we can still all connect with each other online; please take a moment to explore a variety of virtual community-building and social activities. We urge you to pay special attention to self-care at this time and avail yourselves of the various resources outlined in Dean Leslie’s recent memo, Support and Resources for Graduate Students. Counseling and Psychological Services can be reached 24/7 at (609) 258-3141, and virtual CPS counseling sessions are being offered at this time. We also urge you to consult CPS’s helpful guidance for graduate students in this time of crisis.

We appreciate all the steps that have been taken to ensure that the University can continue its core mission during this challenging time. Doing so, however, requires sacrifice and patience from everyone as we learn to cope with pared down services and the inevitable frustration that will occur because something has fallen through the cracks. One of Princeton’s greatest assets is the grace so many people display toward one another daily as we work together to solve problems, respond to crises big and small, and embrace opportunities to improve. Let us all continue this gracious and patient spirit in the days ahead; please know that so many staff are working hard to support you. Some are physically here on-campus, most others are working remotely; all remain deeply committed to keeping you healthy and safe.

None of us knows exactly what the next weeks will bring. We will try to be as responsive as possible to changing needs and circumstances. Please do watch the University COVID-19 website for updates and important messages.

Stay well and take good care of yourselves.

With best wishes,

W. Rochelle Calhoun, Vice President for Campus Life
Sarah-Jane Leslie, Dean of the Graduate School