



March 19, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

As we approach the final weeks of our academic year, we must face the fact that the continuing impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will not allow a return to normalcy for weeks to come. In a [letter earlier today](#) to University System of Maryland (USM) presidents, USM Chancellor Jay A. Perman, MD, urged the leaders of the system's 12 institutions not to allow students to return to campus for the remainder of the semester, to cancel normally-scheduled commencement and convocation activities, and to refund housing costs and student fees where appropriate.

The chancellor's words reflect the same thoughtful and prudent approach this university has followed since the threat of viral outbreak in Maryland was first deemed a possibility. So however challenging and disappointing the impact may be, we will implement additional changes designed to preserve the health and well-being of our community, including:

- **Continuation of distance learning through the end of the academic year.** In his [letter of March 12](#), Interim President Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS, indicated that all in-person didactic instruction would be canceled through at least April 5. All such instruction will now take place via distance learning for the remainder of the academic year.
- **Suspension of in-person commencement and school convocations.** Although commencement and school convocations are scheduled to occur nearly two months from now, we must make decisions about such large functions right away out of respect for our own planning needs, as well as the travel plans of friends and loved ones. The University is actively exploring alternative and meaningful ways to recognize and celebrate our graduates and their families and will communicate our plans within the next week. We also hope to celebrate our graduating students in the fall during UMB's Founders Week. And please be watchful for communication from your school leadership regarding alternatives to convocations.
- **Individual billing adjustments.** Students living at Pascault Row or University Suites at Fayette Square may receive a partial refund of their housing costs if they choose not to reside in those facilities for the remainder of the semester. All UMB students are eligible for a partial refund of certain university fees, including the Campus Center Infrastructure and Service fee (URecFit portion), Parking fee, University Shuttle fee, and the Student

Government Association fee. Please be patient as we develop the best method through which to provide these refunds in compliance with state rules and processes.

We know that your lives and your learning have been greatly impacted by COVID-19 and the changes we have been forced to make as a result. You should also know that our commitment to your education, and the future service to the community, the state and the nation that it represents, has not lessened one bit. Every change we make is with your education and your safety in mind, and as we go through the next few weeks together, we will try to keep you as well-informed as we possibly can.

Sincerely,

Roger J. Ward, EdD, JD, MSL, MPA

Interim Provost, Executive Vice President, and

Dean of the Graduate School