

March 16, 2020

McGovern College of the Arts students:

It has become increasingly clear to all of us that the situation we are dealing with is one of unprecedented scale, with implications that I know can seem frightening. I feel very deeply the emotional toll this can have on you as students, and I know the anxiety it must be causing you. I am committed to providing you the information, the assistance, and the resources you need to get through this, even as we continue to heed the recommendations on how to maintain public health and safety. Please know that your well being is my highest priority.

I want to update you on the situation and our response to it, based on what we know at this moment:

Current status of arts events and courses:

It is possible that many of our performances, productions, public exhibitions, festivals, and special events during the remainder of the spring semester may need to be cancelled. We are working now to determine the implications of university policy and the public health advisories for our arts events.

Regardless, no action taken on such events will impact your degree progress or your progress toward graduation—even if we were to have to cancel a credit-bearing event. Every school and program in the college is developing a plan for continuity of instruction and granting of course credit. You will be informed by your faculty instructors of details of these plans by Friday, March 20. This may involve changes in syllabi; as I said at the end of last week, plans for any given course may not be the same as the plan that was originally intended for that course. However, as I also said at that time, we will deliver the instruction you need, in the time that you need it. We will continue to be in touch with you about details regarding specific courses and situations.

Technology:

I understand that access to technology is a concern, in light of plans for delivery of instruction online. We are working to ensure that students have access to the technology that they need, even if that technology is located in computer labs on campus. We are continuing to monitor

how access to technology impacts public health concerns, including the gathering of people in groups.

At this time, the M.D. Anderson Library will remain open this week for spring-break hours. Normal hours will resume next week. We are working right now to determine the status of the Arts and Technology Center and will update you when we know more. Regarding internet access off campus, note that Comcast and AT&T have both announced that they will open public wifi hotspots free of charge for the next 60 days. For more information, see <https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19> and <https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>.

Facilities:

At this time, college buildings remain open and operational. College leadership is working as we speak to address access to facilities and other specialized spaces such as studios and fabrication labs. I will continue to update you as this information evolves.

Academic advising:

We will continue academic advising as usual, noting only that we have transitioned all advising to remote format in order to avoid face-to-face meetings. You have received an email update on this from Director of Academic Affairs and Student Success Carrie Young. If you did not receive this update, please contact me.

Travel:

I understand that some students, especially international students, are concerned about decisions on whether to temporarily return home. Clearly this is a decision that will vary according to everyone's individual circumstances. I urge everyone to consider their own circumstances, consider the public health advisories, and (in the case of international students) contact the International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO; <https://www.uh.edu/oiss/>) for consultation on individual situations before deciding whether to leave Houston.

Please know that, again, your health and safety is our first concern. Please know also that we will deliver your courses for the rest of the semester; any fear that courses will not be delivered as scheduled should not impact a decision on whether to leave Houston.

Employee status and finances:

I understand that the economic ramifications of this situation are alarming. Here in the college we are taking the following steps: TAs and other graduate assistants will continue to be paid. Hourly student employees will continue to clock in according to the work assignment made by their supervisor, and thus will continue to be paid. All student employees are eligible to

telecommute and work remotely, by agreement with their supervisor. If you need to work remotely, please make the request using one of these two forms: [work-study student request form](#) / [request form for all other staff and student employees](#).

Resources for students:

For the latest and most complete information from the University of Houston, refer to <https://uh.edu/covid-19/>. See especially the link to the very helpful FAQ page (<https://uh.edu/covid-19/faq/>). If you find that you need emotional or mental-health support during this difficult time, please contact the University of Houston Counseling and Psychological Services, at <https://www.uh.edu/caps/>.

The information above is current as of right now. The situation is changing rapidly. I am committed to continuing to communicate with you to provide the most current information possible. I also invite you to follow these social media channels, where we will be posting up-to-date information: twitter @uhkgmDean; twitter @uhkgm_arts; facebook @UHKGMarts; and Instagram @uhkgm_arts.

Let me repeat that I also feel the anxiety that the uncertainty in this situation is causing, and I empathize with how it must be affecting you as students. Uncertainty is unavoidable in a situation like this; however we will continue to provide you with as much information as we can in order to minimize it. Join me in drawing on your experience as artists, which gives us the insight we need to address head-on the uncertainties that life presents to us. Apply those experiences to this situation, and we will come out better for it on the other side.

Please contact me directly with questions.

Sincerely,

A large, bold, black handwritten signature, likely of Andrew Davis, written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the word "Sincerely," and above the typed name and title.

Andrew Davis
Dean and Professor of Music
Cullen Foundation Endowed Chair