April 6, 2020

TO: Students

FROM: Denise B. Maybank
Vice President
Associate Provost for Student Affairs and Services

Dear Spartan Community:

By now you are settling into the temporary new normal – a life of social distancing and greater attention to health and safety concerns than we experienced just a few weeks ago. Let’s remember social distancing is temporary and it does not mean complete isolation, even with the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order issued by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Adhering to the order does not mean you must be isolated inside your four walls 100 percent of the time. You can walk outside and breathe fresh air, whether you live in an apartment or a house, in the city or outside of town. If you leave home, practice social distancing – at least six feet apart – as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

You can do several things, including:

- Go outdoors and walk, run, hike, bicycle or do other recreational activity, but continue to remain at least six feet from people outside your household.
- Do what is necessary for health and safety of you, your family and household members, including your pets. This means, if you need to get medication or need medical care, you may handle your business.
- Go to buy groceries or take-out food or go to get gasoline or other needed supplies.
- Go out to meet the needs of a family member or a family member’s pet.

Find ways to stay connected and unleash your creativity:

- Connect using technology. That’s right, you are not going to get a lecture about spending too much time on your phone right now. Use your smartphones, tablets, computers, etc., to:
  - Gather for game night – virtually. There are many online games that groups can play connecting via Zoom, Google Hangouts, Facetime or other apps.
  - Host a movie day or night on your favorite streaming service. You can even talk during the movie, if your group allows. No one “in the theater” is going to hush you right now.
  - Sing with your friends. Belt out your favorite Karaoke tune long distance.
  - Dance with your friends. If singing isn’t your thing, but you love music, host a virtual dance party.
- Write.
  - Take the time to write letters to others.
o Keep a journal of what is happening in this historic moment or write what you are feeling.
o Start a blog.

- Now is a good time to try something new or get back into something you once loved, such as sketching, playing an instrument, sewing, building birdhouses or other crafts.

- Share your creativity with your friends through photos, text messages and social media.

Take care of yourself

**Should you need medical attention, contact your local medical provider. For those on or near campus,** Olin Health Center continues to be open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Please call 517-353-4660 first if you would like to see a medical provider. To refill prescriptions, use the MyMSUHealth patient portal.

Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) staff are working remotely to meet the needs of MSU students while CAPS offices are closed. If you are a **student in crisis**, please call 911, go to your nearest emergency room or call CAPS anytime day or night at 517-355-8270 and press "1" at the prompt to receive assistance from a crisis counselor over the phone. For all **other information, including appointments, please visit the CAPS website, or reach out through** MyMSUHealth patient portal.

**Spring Semester Undergraduate Grading**

To assist our undergraduate students with the many challenges you now face, MSU is offering most students the option to have final grades in each course transcribed on a binary S/NS (satisfactory/not satisfactory) scale. Once faculty submit grades to the Registrar’s Office at the end of the semester, students will have two weeks to view grades and decide for each class if you would like a numerical 0.0-4.0 grade or S/NS. More details can be found [here](#) along with FAQs to help navigate your decision.

Students are encouraged to work with academic advisors to determine which option is right for your individual needs. Visit [here](#) to find Academic Advising Resources. All MSU transcripts that have any grade reported for Spring 2020 semester will include a statement explaining that the COVID-19 outbreak and the university’s decision to switch to remote-only instruction caused unusual disruptions.

**Graduate and Professional Students Assistance**

To assist our graduate and professional students to defray the costs of technology upgrades needed to complete coursework/research remotely, the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) has designated a limited amount of funds to offer one-time reimbursement awards of up to $50. Applications are reviewed weekly and applicants will be notified as soon as possible. COGS will accommodate as many awards as possible with the available funds. **Apply here** or visit the COGS website.

**SIRS+**

The university wants to learn from the experience we are all having in the virtual environment. In addition to the usual student evaluation forms received at the end of the semester via SIRS (Student
Instructional Rating System), there will be an opportunity to respond to an additional Supplemental Evaluation Survey. This short survey will invite additional student feedback about the transition to learning in the online environment. The feedback from students will help improve the university’s educational offerings. Please respond when you receive the request.

Moving from residence halls

*Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) asks students moving from campus housing to select a designated move out time and to utilize express check-out to allow for proper social distancing. More information from REHS is available here.*

Remote checkout is available to students who need only to return their keys and access cards to complete check-out. Details are available here.

Third Party Packing and Move-Out

If you are unable to return to campus to pack your belongings, REHS has created a process to allow you to designate a third-party to complete the move-out. REHS asks that you complete the third-party authorization form which will collect contact information, outline a process for the move and cover how to gain roommate approval. Once the form is completed, it is received by the student’s neighborhood Facilities team which will contact the third-party designee to schedule an escorted move-out between March 24 and April 12. Facilities will follow student and roommate guidance to establish ownership of belongings and notify your roommate, if they have not yet checked out.

Students are responsible for obtaining their own contract with a moving/storage company. Two Men and A Truck is an MSU approved vendor, but there are other local companies that can be contracted.

In addition to move-out information, find news regarding residence halls, as well as building access for dining halls and service centers at liveon.msu.edu. Summer housing information will also be available via this website once it is released.

Student Affairs and Services

It may look a little different, but Student Affairs and Services (SAS) continues to be here for you. While most SAS offices are open only virtually, the Office of the VP for Student Affairs and Services (SSB 150) remains physically open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday and the Student Services Building is open during regularly scheduled hours. Students may use available laptops in the conference room while practicing social distancing and access Wi-Fi throughout the building. You can also reach us at 517-355-7535 or through email at studentaffairs@msu.edu.

SAS has added a new COVID-19 Information and Resources webpage to our website. Please visit our page to stay engaged, access information and find virtual opportunities. To stay up to date on the coronavirus and MSU, visit msu.edu/coronavirus or call our toll-free coronavirus hotline at 888-353-1294. Continue to use the Keep Learning website to support virtual instruction.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.
Sincerely,

Denise B. Maybank, Ph.D.
Vice President and Associate Provost
for Student Affairs and Services