

March 18, 2020

Dear Members of the Penn State Law and SIA Community,

President Barron has just [announced](#) that: “Based on evolving federal guidance and statewide mitigation plans announced by Gov. Tom Wolf around the growing coronavirus pandemic and the global efforts underway to stop its spread, Penn State has extended the remote-delivery period for all classes through at least the spring semester. Examinations will also be administered remotely. Additionally, spring commencement ceremonies will be postponed while the University explores options for celebrating the achievements of our students.”

We recognize that this extension will create many questions and issues for our students, staff, and faculty. We are here to support you during this challenging period and working with the university to do so. This email provides updates on some of those efforts, including resources for students, telecommuting, and grading. I also will be holding information and listening sessions each week with students and with faculty and staff, and include zoom information for those sessions below.

Resources for Students

- **Financial:** We know that many of you are significantly financially impacted. As mentioned, the university has a [Student Emergency Fund](#) that our students can apply to. We also are working on developing additional support for students.
- **Health Insurance:** We have confirmed with the student health insurance office that, regardless of status, students who have purchased health insurance will have valid coverage until August 12, 2020.
- **Course Materials:** The PSL Library has been in touch with some resources for accessing course materials online in both schools. The university has also worked out free e-textbook access from both [Barnes & Noble](#) and [Vitalsource](#) that may be able to be helpful to you as well.
- **Wifi:** One issue that has come up is that some of you are having challenges with high enough quality wifi access for zoom classes. Please let Matt Gardner know if you are locally based and unable to get the bandwidth needed to participate effectively in class. Here are some resources to help address this issue:
 - The university is working with local providers (Comcast, AT&T, and CenturyLink) to increase bandwidth.
 - Comcast has also agreed to provide [two months of free internet](#) for qualifying individuals, and we have attached a flier about some other services Comcast is providing.
 - The university is also working to provide students with wifi hotspots in situations where local providers are unable to assist.

Telecommuting

We have been working to have as many members of our staff as possible telecommute, and the vast majority of our staff are doing so. For now, please continue to follow the practice you have already worked out with your supervisor for this period.

Grading

We are receiving many questions about how the challenges of COVID-19 will affect our approach to grading this semester, and we are actively working on this issue. I will send separate emails to each school on this issue to provide an update.

During this period of remote instruction, most Penn State Law and SIA services are still available to students and employees. If you need assistance in any of functional areas (such as academic affairs, student services, graduate and international programs, career services, library resources, financial services, IT/AV, Human Resources, etc.), please visit the [Penn State Law](#) and [SIA](#) for information on how best to access those services. Please also continue to check the university's websites providing [coronavirus information](#) and remote [learning](#) and [teaching](#) resources, which are being regularly updated.

I am so grateful for the way our whole community has supported each other as we all navigate this very challenging situation. Let's continue to be there for each other moving forward. Please let us know how we can be helpful and supportive.

Best,
Hari Osofsky