

March 18, 2020

McGovern College Students:

Here's where we are on Wednesday March 18:

I'm sure many of you have seen by now the message on the restriction of student access to the arts facilities (see <https://uh.edu/kgmca/covid-19-dean-communications/2020-03-18-facilities-restriction.pdf>). As I stated there, this was an extraordinarily difficult decision to have to make. I understand the impact it has on all of our students. I understand especially the disappointment that is affecting our students who have been working so hard to prepare for end-of-year projects, exhibitions, performances, and the like. I know it's heartbreaking. Please know that it is for me as well. Again: it is no easier for me to write these things than it is for you to read them.

I also want to convey to you that the college leadership team has been discussing this decision all day. I can tell you that we had a long videoconference, with 19 people "in the room" (virtually), and that each and every person in that meeting knew how impactful this would be on you as students. You have a caring and compassionate group of leaders and faculty members, and they care deeply about you as students. I am grateful for them.

In my message about closure of the facilities to students I did not clarify the situation with the Arts and Technology Center. The ATC, which is closed right now (due to our treating this week as spring break), unfortunately will have to remain closed indefinitely, until we have determined that it is safe to return to work in the buildings. There was simply no alternative to closing the lab, just as we have had to close the arts buildings to students. The lab presents the same public health risks that are present in the arts buildings generally.

Please remember that at this time, the M.D. Anderson Library is open, on spring-break hours this week and on normal hours next week. (The closure of the Music Library and the Art and Architecture library and those facilities' moves remote services—and I will have more information on this subject tomorrow—is unrelated to the operations of the Anderson Library.) I will inform you if that information changes. Remember also that internet access off campus is being enhanced by several national efforts, in particular with Comcast and AT&T both announcing 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>.

Remember our highest priority in all of this: the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty. These are not easy decisions to make, but it is also not worth sacrificing your long-term health and safety for short-term access to the buildings. We must do our part, with the city of

Houston and the nation, to stem the spread of the virus. Sacrifices now will yield greater gains later and a more rapid return to normalcy.

### Academic calendar

I have received various questions about summer sessions and summer programming. At this time no decisions have been made regarding summer sessions; this means these sessions are occurring as scheduled. At this time you may maintain whatever summer course plans you have made.

Note also that there have been no changes to the academic calendar. At this time the semester is proceeding as scheduled, with the dates of the last day of class and the final exam period unchanged. Summer session dates likewise remain unchanged. Remember that, as I mentioned yesterday, commencement is proceeding as scheduled at this time—no decision has been made to alter the commencement schedule or commencement plans. The President announced yesterday that a decision on commencement would be made next week.

Friday this week is still the date by which you may expect to receive more details from your professors about plans for continuity of instruction. We remain committed to delivering the courses you need, in the time that you need them.

### Employee status

I have been keeping you apprised of this issue and will continue to do so, as I understand the economic ramifications of this situation. The closure of the arts facilities to students has consequences for many, including those of you who are employed or on work-study assignments in one of our facilities. Our goal is to determine alternative, remote work arrangements for student employees so that you can continue to be paid. We are at work now with directors of schools and supervisors to determine what such assignments will look like. I will keep you informed. Remember that 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](#).

### Travel

I realize that some of you returned home (in many cases out of state) for spring break and have not yet returned to Houston, given that we essentially extended the spring break by a week (this week, week of March 16). I understand that for those of you who are not in Houston, the closure of the arts facilities to students and the opportunity to retrieve work from the buildings by Friday at noon may pose a problem. If you are in this situation, please contact me.

### Parking

I have received several questions about parking on campus. At this time there are no restrictions on parking on campus. On the contrary, parking restrictions have been relaxed so that a valid UH permit allows for parking in any ungated lot on campus (except for lot 6A). These relaxed restrictions are the norm during spring break, but now they have been extended,

in light of the current circumstances, until the date on which in-person classes resume. As long, relaxed parking regulations will be in effect. Note that the relaxed regulations do not allow for parking in gated lots, garages, restricted spaces (disabled spaces, loading zones, or other reserved spaces), or metered spaces.

#### Other items

Remember that you can find answers to many questions on the very helpful coronavirus FAQ page, at <https://uh.edu/covid-19/faq/>. I am posting all of my updates for students and the public at <https://uh.edu/kgmca/covid-19-dean-communications/>, if you need to refer back to them. We will also post the updates on these social media channels: twitter @uhkgmDean; twitter @uhkgm\_arts; facebook @UHKGMarts; and Instagram @uhkgm\_arts.

If you are in the very understandable situation of needing emotional or mental-health support during this difficult time, remember that you can always contact the University of Houston Counseling and Psychological Services, at <https://www.uh.edu/caps/>.

Please continue to contact me directly with questions and I will continue to answer them.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Davis'.

Andrew Davis  
Dean and Professor of Music  
Cullen Foundation Endowed Chair