



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Dear CUNY Community,

As your Chancellor, my highest priorities in charting a response to the fast-evolving coronavirus threat are to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff while maintaining academic continuity and safeguarding students' ability to finish their semester and protect their financial aid. I know that you are concerned for your own health, the health of your loved ones, and that of our communities. I also share these concerns and know they weigh heavily on all of us.

As you are probably aware, per [Governor Cuomo's comments](#) earlier today, CUNY is implementing a comprehensive transition to distance education for the remainder of the semester, following a five-day instructional recess for pedagogical retooling that will begin tomorrow, March 12.

Our 25 campuses will remain open during and after the recess. These measures allow CUNY to continue serving its students while alleviating pressure on our area during this public health threat.

Here are the immediate implications for our campuses:

- CUNY will begin an instructional recess tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, that will conclude on Wednesday, March 18. No scheduled courses will run on these days, except those of fully online programs and courses otherwise authorized by campus presidents and deans. This will allow CUNY to prepare faculty, students and staff to operate in full distance education mode.
- Starting on Thursday, March 19, all instruction will resume in distance-learning mode, and will remain so through the end of the spring semester.
- Colleges will remain open during the spring semester. This will include dormitories, libraries, research facilities, daycare centers and mission-critical venues that support our students.

By transitioning to distance learning, CUNY will be upholding its responsibility as the largest urban public university in the country and meeting our goal of minimizing exposure to those on our campus communities to coronavirus transmission.

Last night, we learned of the novel coronavirus infection of a John Jay College of Criminal Justice student who tested positive earlier in the day but had not been back to the campus since becoming symptomatic over the weekend. Our thoughts are with the student and I know you join me in wishing her a full recovery. Health officials said the infection posed no threat to the school community, but out of an abundance of caution the school was closed today.

Please know that these kinds of operational and academic challenges are a key focus of my team's attention through this crisis. Earlier this month, I convened a Coronavirus Task Force led by Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Hector Batista and including the Dean of the CUNY School of Public Health, Dr. Ayman El-Mohandes, to serve as a command center and work hand in hand with our 25 campuses to provide systematic guidance to our community, based on the latest information from the federal, state and city health officials. If you

have a specific question that is not answered in this page, you can email the task force at coronavirus.taskforce@cuny.edu.

This week, we urged campuses to reconsider holding non-essential gatherings and community events of more than 50 people during the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester.

These steps are bound to pose challenges and disrupt many of our ordinary routines. I urge everyone to be patient as we make our way through these extraordinary times.

We understand there are many who are feeling heightened levels of anxiety, but as we all go about our daily lives, I suggest that you continue taking precautions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of yourself and your family and stay informed by regularly visiting [CUNY.edu/coronavirus](https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus).

As much as possible, we cannot allow fears to overwhelm facts. This includes the unsubstantiated rumors that have circulated via social media alleging the spread of coronavirus on several CUNY campuses. I urge you to resist the temptation to be persuaded by information that does not come from health and government officials or the University.

I want to thank our faculty, staff and students for all of your cooperation during this challenging time. We will continue to share as much information as we can, as soon as we can, to keep you updated and apprised of any developments.

Sincerely,

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