



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA.

Office of the President

March 31, 2020

Dear Executive Officers and Norman Campus Deans, Chairs, and Directors:

The growing public health crisis and widening economic uncertainty presented by COVID-19 has brought unprecedented financial concerns to many individuals and institutions, including OU. We are approaching this situation with the seriousness it demands. As we navigate the coming months, prudent management of the University's resources is essential to both our short-term and long-term success. OU has proudly served as Oklahoma's flagship institution for nearly 130 years and we will continue to do so through the execution of thoughtful, sound strategies.

Immediately, we are enacting the following measures to help ensure our resources are utilized as effectively as possible:

- **Hiring Freeze**
 - o As previously communicated on the Norman campus by the Provost to Deans, Chairs, and Directors, all regular faculty hiring is paused until further notice. We are also pausing all new offers to Graduate Assistants except those with external funding.
 - o Refilling of all vacant staff positions, both new and existing, will be paused through the end of May. At that time, certain critical positions may be approved with the consent of the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- **Discretionary Spending Restrictions**
 - o Effective immediately, it is crucial that all units on campus limit spending to only mission-critical items and activities. Given the varied nature of units on campus, providing a uniform definition of "mission-critical" is not generally workable. Typically, though, expenses not considered mission-critical include, but are not limited to: meals, entertainment, travel, equipment unrelated to research, renovations, events, sponsorships, and advertisements.
 - o A review process has been established with Purchasing and Financial Services to monitor spending that appears to be discretionary in nature. This review will include expenses to be reimbursed by the OU Foundation.
- **Reimbursements**
 - o As a temporary measure, beginning April 1, 2020, employees must utilize existing purchasing mechanisms (e.g., Crimson Corner or Pcard) to acquire necessary goods and services. Neither the University nor the OU Foundation will permit reimbursements through any other mechanism.

Additional information from the Office of the Senior Vice President for Finance and our Senior Vice President and Provost is forthcoming as it relates to FY21 budgeting. Given uncertainties across our University's revenue sources, all departments should anticipate funding reductions for their FY21 budgets. The situation we are in is unprecedented. Never before have we had to cease in-person academic instruction and close our on-campus housing. While we know this crisis will ultimately pass, we do not know the precise time frame and we do not know the depth of the economic toll it will take on families, institutions, or our state budget. Accordingly, we must initially plan for a range of cuts to our FY21 budget that span the spectrum – from as little as 5% to in excess of 25%. The Senior Vice Presidents will work with each department to create navigable and sustainable budget models. As we approach this planning, we will do so transparently and in partnership.

This is an extraordinary time, requiring us to work together to ensure that we continue to thrive. I am proud to be working with you and appreciate the essential role you play. I am hopeful these measures will be temporary and that we will soon see their end. But it is certain that we will have the need to enact other necessary measures to sustain OU through this crisis. I trust that, together, we can create and implement solutions that best serve our students and the rest of the OU community and that we will emerge stronger than ever. Thank you for your leadership and your love of our University.

Sincerely,
Joseph Harroz, Jr.
Interim President