Presidents Joshua Wynne and Andy Armacost: We will face this challenge together—we are one

Colleagues,

As our communities are changing almost moment by moment, teams of employees across all areas of the University have been making real-time decisions based on how we will continue to operate at the University of North Dakota. We are coming together to problem solve and support each other. We are living the tenet of “ONE UND”.

On Thursday March 19, an executive order was given by Gov. Burgum communicating that he expects we will do our best to continue to practice social distancing. This included the continued closing of public and private K-12 schools to students across North Dakota. We know that this as well as other personal circumstances related to COVID-19 may have a significant impact on many UND employees who are now working remotely. While UND is fully operational during this time, we encourage employees to work with their supervisors so they may balance personal obligations with work responsibilities. As we said on Monday, flexibility is the key.

Staff members are key to our success during this time. We want you to do the best you can and take care of yourselves and your family and understand that it may be challenging to complete your standard work hours while at home. We appreciate your best efforts and are not asking staff members to take annual leave if there is a perceived difference.

For those individuals who need to come to campus to work, such as Facilities Management or Dining Services, please continue to work directly with your supervisor. We can consider alternative scheduling from traditional work shifts and days. Please work directly with your leadership team in those areas.

As we continue to work on campus or are moving around our communities, please remember to:

- Create social distancing between individuals. Six feet apart.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
- Be encouraging to each other.
- Stay connected with your work groups on Zoom, Microsoft Teams or via phone calls if possible. It is important to still feel connected to each other.

We know that students, other than those who need to live here, will not be returning to campus until at least end of the spring semester and that condition may persist into the summer.

The University will continue to remain open and provide instruction via online and remote learning, perform research within specified safety parameters, and provide service to its community and North Dakota. This means that its primary sources of revenue (tuition, state appropriations, research, etc.) will continue to flow throughout this period.

Many UND students and/or their parents have asked about refunds on pre-paid housing, dining, parking fees, and other fee related services because they will probably not be able to avail themselves of those services. We are working with the North Dakota University System on that question and a coordinated response from the System is likely, but the timing of that response is uncertain.

By providing instruction and working remotely, the University will continue to remain open and be able to continue the vast majority of business. We are monitoring all of our income streams closely and if issues arise we will provide communication to the University community. The situation, as one can imagine, is extremely fluid, but our goal is to get through this with our University community as intact as possible.

Our top priority is to take care of our UND community. This begins with looking out for each other, giving you timely information, and helping to set expectations during this time of uncertainty. Most important is your safety and health. We will face this challenge together—we are one.

Sincerely,

Joshua Wynne
Interim President
University of North Dakota

Andrew Armacost
Incoming President
University of North Dakota