



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Ian D. MacFarlane
Chair

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.
Secretary

March 17, 2020

Dear President:

Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order yesterday, March 16, 2020, that prohibits large gatherings and events¹. We, in collaboration with the Governor's office, strongly urge all postsecondary institutions of higher education, including colleges, universities, and private career schools, to promote social distancing in light of the COVID-19 public health crisis our nation is experiencing.

Unless your institution offers educational training that can directly and most immediately provide services that address the current COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., educational training for health care professionals), we recommend that you immediately cease all face-to-face instruction and implement distance education². If distance education is not a viable option, we recommend that you postpone all face-to-face instruction until the prohibition of large gatherings and events is lifted.

It is incredibly critical at this time that all Maryland residents and businesses heed Governor Hogan's executive orders, even if the order does not explicitly apply to you or your organization. Social distancing is the primary method to prevent further spread of COVID-19. We do not want the Maryland higher education community responsible for the further spread of COVID-19.

Given the extreme public health consequences that may arise if institutions fail to heed the dire warnings of public health professionals and fail to comply with Governor Hogan's directive, we anticipate that you will follow our recommendation and immediately cease face-to-face instruction.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission will work with all institutions to ensure student success during this time. If you have questions or would like to share information with MHEC regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19, please email us at COVID19.mhec@maryland.gov.

Thank you,

Dr. James D. Fielder
Secretary

¹ <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Executive-Order-Amending-Large-Gatherings.pdf>

² As provided in a letter dated March 11, 2020, no approval from MHEC at this time is needed to move lectures, discussions, assessments, and other academic coursework to an online format.