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Date: 8/11/2020 12:22:27 PM

Subject: Revision to Fall Semester Plans Regarding On-Campus Housing, Tuition and Fees



**Revision to Fall Semester Plans
Regarding On-Campus Housing, Tuition and Fees**

A Message to the Penn Community

from

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Wendell Pritchett, Provost

Craig Carnaroli, Executive Vice President

J. Larry Jameson, Dean, Perelman School of Medicine and
Executive VP University of Pennsylvania for the Health System

We write today with an enormous sense of sadness. It had been our fervent hope since the outset of the coronavirus pandemic that public health measures and an increased availability of testing would allow us to offer our undergraduates a hybrid learning experience this fall that, by including more remote learning, social distancing and other safety precautions, would enable all the students who desired it the opportunity to live and learn on campus.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to spread at an alarming rate across the country, with approximately 2 million new cases reported over just the past month. The progression of the disease is evident in many states from which Penn welcomes thousands of students. The sheer number of students who by Pennsylvania public health recommendation would now upon arrival—or based upon testing or high-risk exposure—need to go into a two-week quarantine is untenable. At the same time, supply chain issues have more severely limited the availability and the turn-around time of COVID testing than medical experts foresaw. Since we last communicated we learned that our planned pre-testing regimen would not be possible. The combination of these factors radically constrains our ability to provide a safe and meaningful on-campus experience for our undergraduates.

Thus, based on the advice of the leading health experts at Penn Medicine and on current public health restrictions, with the full support of the Penn Board of Trustees, we must share the deeply disappointing news that **with only very limited exceptions for international students and those students dealing with significant housing or personal hardships, we will not be able to accommodate undergraduate students in University housing.** Students who need to apply for on-campus housing exceptions can do so at [My Home at Penn](#) .

As we have previously announced, the vast majority of instruction for undergraduate students will be online, with very limited exceptions (clinical experiences in Nursing, and classes in other undergraduate schools that are essential for students to meet their curricular or pedagogical requirements). Graduate and professional programs will continue to evaluate their own operations.

It is important to note that with the limited exception of this required in-person instruction, there will be no physical on-campus activities in the fall semester. For the safety of students and the broader community, we are encouraging all other students not to return to Philadelphia.

Our world-class faculty are preparing an outstanding array of engaging online courses, ensuring that the University continues to provide a meaningful and high-quality education to all our students. Faculty have been busy this summer designing new recordings, interactive elements for their students and working with their schools in state-of-the-art classroom studios. In addition, University Life and the Office of Student Affairs, the Center for Undergraduate Research, and College Houses have designed new ways for student groups and cohorts to connect online, to hold virtual performances, to present and attend academic poster sessions and fairs and to gather virtually. Some of these have already begun, with the largest ever Pre-

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Freshman Program currently underway. Every incoming undergraduate will participate in the launch of our online New Student Orientation, which will include year-long cohort activities this year around the theme of Civic Engagement. New Student Orientation will culminate in a virtual Convocation on August 31st.

While we have great confidence in the high quality of this educational and college life experience, we deeply regret that these changes represent a significant disappointment to families and students. We have stressed in all of our previous messages that our decisions for the fall would be guided by the most current medical information and governmental directives, and that our plans would need to be flexible and could change depending on the progression of the pandemic. For everyone's safety, it is imperative to take the steps we are announcing today.

Despite the escalating costs of providing a safe and meaningful educational program, we recognize and appreciate the financial challenges incurred by many students in our community as a result of the pandemic. As a result, we have determined to make tuition and fee adjustments for the fall semester. **Tuition for the fall semester will be rolled back by 3.9%, thus freezing tuition at last year's rate, and the General Fee will be reduced for the fall semester by 10%. Housing and dining fees that have been paid by students will be credited or refunded in full, consistent with the methodology used in the Spring.** Student financial aid budgets for tuition and general fees will remain at current levels, despite the decrease in cost to students, and students remaining at home will still receive aid for food commensurate with our off-campus dining rate. The University has made significant increases in our financial aid budget to assist students and families in this difficult time and we will continue to make emergency assistance available to support all students who need it.

Since March, when we made the difficult but necessary decision to depopulate the campus, faculty and staff from across the University have worked tirelessly to prepare our campus to welcome students this fall. We continue to hope that we will be able to welcome students back for the spring semester, and will do everything in our power to maximize that possibility.

All of us at Penn are deeply grateful for the patience that families and students have shown as we have navigated the rapidly changing landscape of this evolving global crisis. We sincerely believe that the educational experience that students will receive this fall will be among the finest available in the world. We will do all that we can to keep each class involved and connected virtually, so that they can continue to interact and share their Penn experience with classmates in a safe and productive way.

We know that there will be many questions that arise because of the changes we are announcing today. We have prepared an [FAQ](#) that should be helpful in providing more detailed information. If you have questions that are not answered in the FAQ, you can email coronavirus@upenn.edu.

We thank you for your ongoing understanding and support of the University of Pennsylvania. This has been an extraordinarily challenging year, which has solidified so clearly the invaluable spirit and solidarity of our Penn family. Please know that the University is committed to your safety and well-being, and to providing a truly world-class educational experience. As we have promised before, we will keep you posted on any additional changes as we progress into the semester.

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