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## COVID-19 Update from President Hatch

1 message

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Bcc: broadcast-all@gg.wfu.edu

Thu, Apr 30, 2020 at 11:00 AM

Dear Wake Forest community,

Today, as I update you on important matters at Wake Forest, I again want to express my gratitude for your flexibility and patience as we adapt to the changing circumstances related to the COVID-19 crisis. We have experienced a great disruption in the ways our community engages, and I appreciate your effort and resilience. We will have more challenges ahead, and I am confident we will continue to confront them with a spirit of unity and hope.

For now, I want to share more information and details about several specific topics.

### Structured Move Out of Undergraduate Residence Halls

We are moving toward a **highly structured, phased move out starting the week of May 11th. Please note, there will be a [robust set of expectations](#) associated with this process.** These expectations are meant to prioritize student and family safety and the safety of our campus community. Individuals who meet [certain conditions](#) should not return to campus. Students and families should NOT travel to the Winston-Salem campus to retrieve personal belongings unless approved to do so by the Office of Residence Life and Housing.

**If the public health guidance changes, we will have to adapt our plans for the safety of all involved.** Because of this, there is a possibility that our move-out plans could change quickly, which could mean postponing or canceling move-out appointments. We share this so you can make an informed decision about your travel plans to Winston-Salem. In the event move-out appointments are canceled, the University will pack and store student belongings.

**For students and families who are unable or choose not to come back to campus to move out,** the University will provide access to options for pack-and-store or pack-and-ship.

For additional details on our move-out process, including an informational video, please visit [go.wfu.edu/s20moveout](https://go.wfu.edu/s20moveout).

### Virtual Conferring of Degrees

As you know, out of necessity, this year's commencement will look different than our traditional commencement festivities. We will have two parts to our celebration of the Class of 2020. A virtual conferring of degrees for our undergraduate and graduate students will take place on **Monday, May 18 at 7 p.m. (EST)**. The entire Wake Forest community is invited to be part of this celebration and will be able to participate at [go.wfu.edu/wfugrad20](https://go.wfu.edu/wfugrad20). Some schools and departments may plan complementary virtual events to celebrate graduates.

### Commencement

As we started planning an in-person commencement celebration, we benefited from the input of our graduates. The desire for community -- to be reunited with your friends and your class -- was overwhelmingly clear. While each graduate school will conduct its own hooding ceremony, the undergraduate and graduate school commencement will take place outside on Hearn Plaza, weather and public health conditions permitting.

Our plans to celebrate the Class of 2020 are as follows:

- Commencement for the Class of 2020 will take place on **Saturday, October 31 at 1 p.m. (EST)**.
- Graduate and professional school hooding ceremonies will also be held during that weekend. Details are forthcoming from each program and school.
- Should public health concerns prevent us from gathering in large groups on October 31, our alternate commencement date will be Saturday, May 22, 2021.
- Additional information, ticket distribution, registration and a schedule of events will be updated frequently. Please visit [commencement.wfu.edu](https://commencement.wfu.edu) for the latest information.

## Summer Sessions I & II

As previously reported, Summer Session I classes will be conducted remotely. **We will share plans for Summer Session II no later than May 15.** Based on public health guidance, we remain hopeful about the possibility of offering some in-person Summer II classes on-campus, assuming it is safe to do so.

In many of our academic units, the smaller enrollments and fewer class sections during the summer provide an ideal opportunity to incorporate best practices in course design. Wake Forest has offered high-quality online education via undergraduate courses and a number of online graduate degree programs for years, and those programs will continue this summer. Other graduate degree programs with full-term summer courses will begin remotely, with possible updates to instructional mode coming by May 15. We are excited about the innovative and engaging remote courses being designed by faculty for this summer.

The pass/fail policy that was designed for the COVID-19 course transition during the spring semester will not apply to these summer courses. The revised undergraduate summer schedule was posted (and could be viewed by students in WIN) on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 5 p.m., and students began registering for summer classes on Monday, April 13, 2020. Further changes to those course offerings (including new courses/additional sections of existing courses) may follow, according to demonstrated need and student demand. Any such changes will be announced to students via WIN and email messages.

## Fall Scenario Planning

Dean of the School of Business, Charles Iacovou, has agreed to convene a group tasked with defining a roadmap for safely returning to in-person classes and usual operations. With the health and safety of our community as our primary concern, we are planning for multiple scenarios that would prepare us to return to campus in a safe manner. Public health officials are active partners in our scenario planning.

We believe we have many conditions working in our favor: Winston-Salem and the surrounding areas have experienced relatively few COVID-19 cases; the small size of our campus community allows us more flexibility in housing and class arrangements to adjust as necessary to social distancing practices; and our affiliation with a major hospital system gives us exceptional access to healthcare experts.

Depending upon public health conditions, we plan to conduct fall semester Wake Forest-sponsored study abroad/away undergraduate programs. If you have questions, contact the [Center for Global Programs and Studies](#).

At this time, we hope to hold Family Weekend (Oct. 9-11) and Homecoming Weekend (Nov. 6-8) as scheduled.

We will continue to keep you informed as we make decisions and provide another update on or before **May 15**.

## Undergraduate Housing Selection for the 2020-21 Academic Year

We had planned to announce a timeline for housing selection, but regret that there are still too many unknowns to move forward with that process at this time. To avoid having to make substantial changes to housing plans if the public health situation shifts, we are going to take additional time to plan for various scenarios and continue to monitor the ever-changing public health landscape.

We will provide another update from the Office of Residence Life and Housing on or before May 29. For more on housing selection, please visit [go.wfu.edu/2021housingselection](https://go.wfu.edu/2021housingselection).

Lastly, we want to acknowledge that uncertainty adds to the daily stress and anxiety we face now due to COVID-19. We will continue to provide regular updates as the public health situation becomes more clear and plans to sustain our academic mission and residential community come into focus. As indicated above, expect regular updates over the next month.

Thank you for all you are doing for Wake Forest. As we begin this final exam week, I wish you all the very best. Most of all, please continue to stay healthy and safe.

With gratitude,

Nathan O. Hatch  
President