



COVID-19 Update from President Hatch

1 message

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Dear Wake Forest community,

Congratulations for completing one of the most challenging and unexpected semesters in memory. No one could have imagined the dramatic turn our lives would take after spring break, and I remain deeply grateful for the remarkable resilience of the Wake Forest faculty and staff. Their dedication to our students has always been a hallmark of this University, and they shined when it mattered most. I am equally grateful to our students, who overcame the great disappointment of not being able to return to campus and yet finished the semester with hard work, patience and grace.

This coming Monday, we would have gathered on Hearn Plaza to celebrate the Class of 2020. Commencement is among my favorite moments at Wake Forest, and my heart goes out to our graduates and their families. At 7 p.m. on Monday, May 18, we will celebrate the many wonderful contributions our graduates made to our community and salute them as we confer their degrees. We look forward to showing our admiration for this class and bringing closure to this chapter of their Wake Forest journey even as we eagerly anticipate holding a more traditional Commencement ceremony in person on October 31. Please join us on Monday at commencement.wfu.edu/vcd/ and wish our graduates well on social media using #WFU20.

Today, I have four important updates to share: additional refunds for student fees, move out of undergraduates from residence halls, the status of summer programs and preparations for the fall semester.

Additional Refunds

The senior leadership of the University has carefully reviewed the fees associated with our normal operations on campus and made the decision to offer partial refunds to undergraduates of student fees associated with health, wellbeing, student activities and parking, where applicable. Graduate students will receive direct communication from their deans about the refunds relevant to their schools.

Parents of undergraduate students will receive more information about this process on Thursday, May 28, and students will receive instructions for claiming those refunds on Monday, June 1.

Move-Out Process

I am pleased to report that the phased move-out process of residence halls began last week and has run smoothly, with many families taking advantage of packing and storage options. I am grateful for the work and creativity of campus life staff and campus partners, as well as the patience and understanding of our students and their families throughout this process.

More than 2,300 appointments have been set for students to come in person and collect their belongings; another 850 students have made arrangements to pack and store belongings or, in some cases, ship boxes home. We are still looking for plans from approximately 100 students whose belongings remain in residence halls. If you have not yet submitted your move-out intent to Residence Life and Housing, please do so as quickly as possible through [the housing portal](#). Email housing@wfu.edu for assistance.

Summer Programs

Wake Forest University will conduct both Summer Session I and Summer Session II classes remotely. We are excited about the innovative and engaging online course delivery being offered by faculty this summer. Further changes to those [course offerings](#) -- including new courses and additional sections of existing courses -- may follow, depending on student demand. We will announce changes and additional offerings to students via WIN and email messages.

The unique spring 2020 pass/fail policy that was designed for the COVID-19 course transition during the spring semester will not apply to these summer courses, as we revert back to our standard policies for pass/fail.

We made these decisions after carefully reviewing all available information and extensively considering the risks and rewards of attempting a return to in-person programming this summer. Ultimately, we prioritized the health and safety of our campus community and the ability to effectively prepare for a successful fall semester over the desire to resume classes and programs on campus this summer.

Fall Scenario Planning

It is our full intent to return to on-campus instruction this fall, and we have designed a process to achieve that aim. Many factors will make a return to campus possible: 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 guidelines; and our affiliation with a major hospital system gives us exceptional access to healthcare experts. We expect to deliver our plans for the fall semester no later than June 30, and we will provide updates regularly as we proceed toward the fall opening of classes.

As previously shared, Dean of the School of Business Charles Iacovou is leading a group of faculty and administrators tasked with creating a roadmap for safely returning to in-person classes and usual operations. In addition, academic planning teams are hard at work exploring multiple strategies for delivering the highest quality experience for our students this fall. The Roadmap Team will coalesce all the valuable contributions of each part of campus and prepare a plan focused on Wake Forest resuming classes on campus for the Fall 2020 semester in the most safe and effective way. The process includes academic subject matter experts from across campus, including public health officials and faculty leaders, and benefits from the input and insight of several campus partners and national thought leaders. I am grateful for the full campus collaboration to bring a plan to fruition with all deliberate speed.

Concurrently, our plans for study away will be taking shape. We will announce fall semester Wake Forest-sponsored study abroad/away undergraduate programs by June 30 as well. If you have questions about a specific program of study or region, contact the [Center for Global Programs and Studies](#).

Though these are unsettling times, I find hope in the work of our dedicated faculty and staff, in the determination of our students as they continue to pursue their dreams, and in the confidence that we will remain a strong Wake Forest community despite the challenges we will contend with this summer and beyond.

Thank you for all you bring to Wake Forest and everything you are doing for our community. Please continue to stay healthy and safe.

With gratitude,

Nathan O. Hatch
President