

Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Ian D. MacFarlane
Chair

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

March 24, 2020

Dear President,

First and foremost, I want to say “thank you” for all you have done to protect your students, faculty, staff, and the communities you serve against the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Everyday has brought us new information regarding this pandemic and, with that, new challenges to address. Your leadership has been, and continues to be, critical to ensure that we minimize the impact of COVID-19 on Marylanders and “flatten the curve.”

Yesterday, March 23, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order that required all non-essential businesses to close to the public by 5pm.¹ This does not mean that your campus needs to close. Instead, all face-to-face instruction, unless it is for essential training that directly provides a service to the COVID-19 pandemic, should cease. Instruction that is provided digitally and remotely may continue.

For other campus operations, any non-essential face-to-face function provided to students and the general public should cease. We understand that you may need to keep staff on the premises to ensure the continuation of day-to-day operations, along with ongoing security measures. To help you identify facilities that are critical to your campus infrastructure, I suggest you review the interpretive guidance provided by Governor Hogan’s Office.²

Let me take this opportunity to emphasize Governor Hogan’s remarks from yesterday. “We are telling all Marylanders to follow all of the directives and to follow the state law against crowds of more than ten people,” said Governor Hogan. “And we are telling you, unless you have an essential reason to leave your house, stay in your home.” We – the higher education community – must comply with the spirit of Governor Hogan’s order and practice social distancing. The number of people reporting to your campus should be limited significantly. No employee who can continue their work remotely should be on campus. People should remain at home as much as possible.

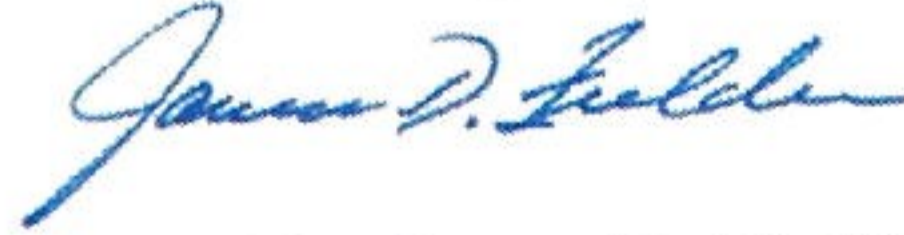
As this pandemic continues, you can expect to receive further coordinating and communication guidance from me and this agency. You should also expect further inquiries from me and my staff as we work with Governor Hogan’s Office, the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Please do not hesitate to contact me or our agency with questions or concerns (covid19.mhec@maryland.gov).

¹ <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Gatherings-THIRD-AMENDED-3.23.20.pdf>

² <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OLC-Interpretive-Guidance-COVID19-04.pdf>

Again, I am grateful for your leadership, cooperation, and collaboration during this unprecedented time. I am also impressed to hear of the innovative strategies your faculty and staff have implemented to maintain the high quality academic instruction that you have always provided. We appreciate the open lines of communication that have been created, and look forward to receiving continued updates from each of your campuses.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James D. Fielder".

Dr. James D. Fielder
Secretary