

Dear Students,

We need you to truly practice social distancing.

As you know, the University of Florida and our partners throughout the state and country are taking unprecedented and proactive measures to support efforts in preventing the spread of COVID-19. This virus strain is not to be taken lightly, and it will take all of us working together to halt its spread. The Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) proclaim **the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**

Universities throughout our state have transitioned course delivery to an online platform, have postponed or cancelled events, and have created support services to assist students impacted by the virus. On Friday, the Florida Commissioner of Education strongly recommended school districts to extend spring break by an extra week leading to closures of K-12 schools throughout our state. Together, these social distancing efforts are part of a sweeping attempt to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

Our state, our home, needs the Gator family to step up and help with this mission! We need you, our Gator student community, to recognize the risks associated with the contraction and spread of COVID-19 and work with us to lessen your possible contact with the virus.

**UF strongly encourages students whether you remain in Gainesville or have left the campus community, to truly practice social distancing.**

Social distancing means creating physical space between you and others (the CDC recommends 6-10 feet). Public health experts also recommend minimizing the number of close in-person interactions you are having. Participating in good public health practice - which is a responsibility for all of us — requires us to think about how we can decrease those close contacts.

What is **not** social distancing:

- Piling on a couch with friends for a movie night.
- Going to a party with a large group of people
- Group travel or trips
- Socializing in a crowded bar

In addition to these important societal efforts, the CDC recommends **washing your hands often with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds)**. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Additionally, the CDC recommends sanitizing the surfaces you regularly touch; declining opportunities to shake hands; and refraining from touching community surfaces whenever possible (door handles, railings, napkin dispensers, etc).

While you may be feeling fine, your engagement in social settings **may contribute** to someone else getting sick. The public health crisis we are in disproportionately impacts older adults (there are more than 5 million adults over the age of 60 in Florida) and those with a history of respiratory or chronic illness. The potential for life threatening consequences is real. Medical experts tell us that while you may carry the virus and have no symptoms, you could transmit it to someone who is at risk of experiencing serious symptoms.

Importantly, if you are feeling ill or display symptoms associated with COVID-19, please self-quarantine and call the Student Health Care Center at 352-294-7472 or your local provider for further guidance and direction.

It is our collective responsibility as Gators and citizens of the world, to use sound judgment, preventative measures and listen to health official recommendations in order to keep our community healthy. Play defense and work to protect yourself and those around you.

Be safe, and as always, Go Gators!

Dr. D'Andra Mull  
Vice President of Student Affairs