



Bruce A. McPheron, PhD

Executive Vice President
and Provost

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Executive Vice President and
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Dear Ohio State Community:

We hope you and your families are well. We are now well past the second half of summer term, and our gratitude once again goes to our university community for your hard work and perseverance under extraordinary circumstances.

Our front line professionals and support staff across the university continue to make us proud. Our Wexner Medical Center, in particular, has been a beacon of patient care and research advances in our region and beyond.

We all know that cases of COVID-19 have been rising in the past few weeks — in Ohio and in many other states. The increase in cases is very concerning, and we are continually assessing and evaluating our operations in response to the current situation. As we look toward a return to on-campus operations in the autumn, our priorities are to keep students, faculty and staff as safe as possible while empowering them to advance their vital work in teaching, learning, research, creative inquiry and patient care. Our success depends on all of us wearing masks, physically distancing, practicing good hygiene and maintaining reduced traffic and population density on our campuses and in our facilities.

As always, we are Together As Buckeyes. This week's updates are below.

Student, faculty and staff health and well-being

The [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website](#) has been updated with additional guidance on student health and well-being as well as faculty and staff health and well-being. Topics covered include:

- Strategies to build resiliency and reduce stress
- Tips to stay in optimal health
- Maintaining school-life balance
- Financial wellness
- Work-life balance as a parent or caregiver
- Mental health support
- Dealing with grief

For more, visit the [mental health and wellness webpage](#). These resources are in addition to several others listed at the bottom of this email.

The university state of emergency is extended through July 25, enabling Ohio State to continue to utilize Disaster Leave ([Policy 6.28](#)).

Federal reversal of rule impacting international students

Ohio State is encouraged by news that the federal government will be maintaining flexibility for international students to continue their education in the autumn.

This week, a rule was reversed that would have required international students to transfer or leave the country if their schools held classes entirely online. Before the reversal, Ohio State had signed on to an amicus brief filed on behalf of 180 colleges and universities in support of a lawsuit challenging the rule. We expect additional information on the revised guidelines soon.

As the university has [stated](#), our international students are a vital part of our vibrant academic community. We remain committed to supporting their contributions to every discipline, and we will continue to advocate on their behalf.

Focus on racial justice

This week, the university announced the [membership](#) of a university-wide Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities. It is co-chaired by James L. Moore III, vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, and Tom Gregoire, dean of the College of Social Work.

The task force has been convened to provide tangible recommendations to create a more equitable, healthy, supportive and nurturing community. The group includes students, faculty and staff, and its members will be engaging broadly with the Ohio State community to identify and propose action steps. Read more at the [task force website](#).

As shared last month, Ohio State has established a \$1 million seed fund for interdisciplinary research and creative work that can contribute to the elimination of racism and solve its underlying causes and consequences. Yesterday, the university extended a call for proposals to principal investigators. Ohio State will issue grants of up to \$50,000 in two phases over the next two years. The first set of grants will be awarded in December 2020. To review the request for proposals and apply, visit the [Office of Research website](#).

Additionally, the Wexner Medical Center and the health sciences colleges are working to address racism as a social determinant of health through the Anti-Racism Action Plan. The plan will work to accelerate structural and systemic change supporting equity in health and well-being. More information is available at the medical center's [Anti-Racism Action Plan website](#).

Summer commencement speaker

Approximately 1,600 Buckeyes will graduate on Aug. 9 during our virtual summer commencement, and we were pleased to share this week that Michael Redd, an Olympic gold medalist and member of the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame, will serve as speaker.

A pre-ceremony program featuring messages from graduates, deans and other university leaders will begin at 1:30 p.m., with the virtual commencement ceremony starting at 2 p.m. The pre-program and ceremony can be viewed by [livestream](#). As a reminder, an in-person ceremony to honor our graduates will occur when it is safe to do so. For more, visit [Ohio State News](#).

As always, thank you for all that you do — and Go Buckeyes!

Sincerely,

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COVID-19 Resources

- [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes information and guidance](#)
- [Information about coronavirus and the university's response](#)
- [Resources for faculty](#)
- [Resources for COVID-19 research](#)
- [Resources for students](#)
- [Resources for staff](#)

Wellness Resources

- Faculty and staff can use the [Human Resources Keep Well website](#), the [Chief Wellness Officer Health and Wellness page](#) and [Your Plan For Health](#).
- Students can use the [Counseling and Consultation Service](#) (CCS) and the [Buckeye Peer Access Line](#) (PAL), which operates Monday through Thursday from 8 p.m. to midnight, and Friday from 2 to 6 p.m.
- CCS also provides guidance for [ways for faculty and staff to support students](#).
- The Ohio State: Wellness app is designed for students but offers tips and guidance useful for all members of our community. It is available for [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices.