



COVID-19 Response

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Welcome to COA Spring term 2020. Our campus is currently closed to all but authorized personnel, as per Maine state guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All COA academic and co-curricular programs have migrated online for the term. Please check back here for updates and helpful information.

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Important update from President Collins

March 12, 2020

Dear College of the Atlantic Community,

I want to begin by acknowledging the trying and difficult nature of what many of us are experiencing surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we are facing one of the biggest public health emergencies of modern times. Much is being asked of you as we move through what is increasingly looking like a very disruptive period, but I fully believe we can rise to the task and continue to support each other as a community through these unique times.

Our responsibility at COA is first and foremost to do everything we can to protect the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty, and to contribute to wider public health measures to help protect our community. In light of those responsibilities, and based on the growing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, **we are moving all instruction for spring term 2020 to an online format, closing campus residence halls, and eliminating all in-person services for the remainder of the academic year.** After much consultation, thought, and study, I believe that this is the very best decision for the COA community.

Academics

COA is committed to providing an exceptional education in human ecology and we will continue to do so during the spring, even as we incorporate new technologies for learning. Faculty members are working diligently to alter, adapt, and create courses that will work well for their students this spring. **By Friday morning, March 20, we will be posting a revised slate of courses online. Registration will commence on Monday, March 23.** Details about the registration process will be forthcoming from registrar Judy Allen via email within the next few days and will also be posted online on our COVID-19 page.

Obviously, some classes will translate quite well to an online format, while others might not – and I fully recognize that for some students, this might put a hurdle in your academic path. For that reason, we are instituting more flexibility for independent studies, residencies, and other learning options for spring term.

All outdoor and wilderness leadership programs set for spring break have been cancelled, as has the short course in molecular biology with the MDI Biological Laboratory, and our abroad program in France.

- If you have questions regarding the spring academic program, please contact provost Ken Hill at khill@coa.edu. With questions about specific courses, please contact the instructor.
- If you have questions or would just like to discuss learning in an online environment, please contact COA dean of teaching and learning Bonnie Tai at btai@coa.edu.

Residence halls

COA residence halls will be closing on Wednesday, 3.18. Students must have their things packed and be moved out by this date. Students that feel they cannot move out and have compelling reasons as to why they need to stay, or believe they are facing undue hardships as a result of this decision, are encouraged to petition [Student Life](#) for an exemption to this policy.

Students are asked to pack all of their things before they leave their rooms. We will be supplying boxes in order to facilitate this. For students who cannot bring their things with them, we are making storage available locally and free of charge. We can also ship items for students, provided they cover the costs.

While food service typically ends with the last day of the term, we will be opening TAB for lunch for students this Saturday, March 14 through Wednesday, March 18, in order to make things just a little easier for everyone as they prepare to leave campus.

For those students living off campus, you should actively consider what is best for you at this time. I encourage you to go home to be with your family if that is possible, as we do not have a good idea of how long this pandemic might last, or of any potential new travel and quarantine restrictions that might arise. We understand that for some, Bar Harbor is home or the best and safest place to be. If that is the case, I need to remind you that while we will have some faculty and staff working on campus during spring term, all in-person services will be suspended after Wednesday, March 18.

We will be offering free shuttle service to Bar Harbor airport, Bangor airport, and bus stations in Bangor through next Wednesday.

- To petition for a housing exemption, or to learn more about airport shuttles, please contact COA Student Life operations manager Ingrid Hill at ihill@coa.edu.
- For questions about our move-out program, please contact COA dir. of buildings and grounds Millard Dority at mdority@coa.edu.

Visitors

We are instituting a no-visitor policy on campus, effective immediately. The only exceptions to this policy are family and friends coming to help students move out. In these instances, we ask our visitors to practice social distancing and responsible infection control behaviors, such as washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes. Family and friends are welcome to help students move out, but are not allowed to stay on campus.

All other planned visits and spring term events are cancelled.

Financial aid

While the cost of tuition at COA will remain the same for spring term, we are assessing other costs and fees to place them in-line with our online course offerings. Realizing that there will be implications on financial aid, we are making available one-on-one information sessions for all students. In addition:

- We will not be charging room and board to students not living on campus
- We are assessing course fees, lab fees, student services fees, and other charges to see what can be reduced
- We are assessing our work-study program with the goal of providing as many employment opportunities as we can during the term, regardless of location

For questions related to financial aid, contact Amy McIntire at amcintire@coa.edu or Linda Black at lblack@coa.edu.

[You can schedule an individual meeting at this link](#) by clicking "save" on the time slot you'd like to reserve. Meetings will be offered in-person, by phone, or by computer until Wednesday, and by phone or computer after.

Student support

We are fully committed to maintaining our sense of community under these new circumstances. Because we are moving to online courses, we will be suspending our campus-based services for spring term and cancelling programming that was planned for spring break. We plan to continue to meet student needs by offering programming and resources in new ways as we ensure that we have a supportive and engaged educational environment.

Student Life staff will continue to be available to students to advise and provide support, and to offer creative programming. We are talking with campus counselors about the possibility of offering mental health services by phone or video call, and we are actively exploring options for a virtual outing club, online wellness resources, social hangouts and virtual residence life offered by RAs. In addition, COA2 will continue to offer programming that will be available to all students. We are talking with the writing center, study skills person and others about academic support options.

I know that these decisions and changes are significant and are disruptive to people's spring plans. If individuals are having a hard time or finding that they are dealing with anxiety and increased stress, please reach out to:

- Dean of student life Sarah Luke at sjluke@coa.edu
- Director of student support and wellness Barbara Conry at bconry@coa.edu
- Coordinator of international student services Dianne Clendaniel at dclendaniel@coa.edu
- Student life operations manager Ingrid Hill at ihill@coa.edu
- Coordinator of campus engagement Nick Jenei at njenei@coa.edu

They are all available to help students navigate these challenging times.

Travel

Earlier this week, we curtailed all non-essential, COA-affiliated travel. This restriction still holds.

For all community members working on campus beginning next week: **if you leave the state of Maine, or there is reason to believe you have been exposed to someone who has been exposed to COVID-19, you are required to remain off campus for 14 days after your return.**

For questions related to this policy, COA staff and faculty should contact their supervisor.

As I stated in All College Meeting this week, COA is an innovative school – we began as such and have doggedly held onto that approach, constantly growing and evolving, questioning ourselves, and working to use human ecology to explore and address the most pressing questions of our day. It is this spirit that will carry us through these challenging times. We are a community that comes together for one another, that supports each other, and that learns, grows, and evolves together. Doing so at a distance this spring will be challenging, yes, but I'm also excited in many ways, and hope you will be too. If we all continue to work together, we can not only accomplish what we need to this term, but accomplish it really well.

Our plan is to be fully back to normal by fall term. We will be evaluating this outlook as part of our regular meetings, and will update you on our thoughts regarding fall term registration by mid-April. For now, please keep an eye on your email and refer to coa.edu/news/covid-19/ for a full compendium of information regarding our plans for spring term.

In the meantime, be kind to one another. Be supportive. We'll get through this.

Darron