

In Words

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## COVID-19 Update to Parents April 1, 2020

Office of Communications

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Dear Kenyon families,

Now in our second week of distance learning — with students, faculty and staff finding a new equilibrium — we wanted to share several updates from a quiet, but humming, Gambier.



### **Distance learning**

Our 428 spring courses resumed last week in reimagined formats, including labs, studios and performance-based courses. We are grateful to the faculty and students who entered these experimental spaces with the same mix of intellectual fearlessness and humility that has defined their more traditional classrooms. As President Decatur writes in a reflection on the [first night of his online seminar](#), “Some have called this a transition to ‘online’ or ‘remote’ education. But in a sense, the education at Kenyon isn’t transitioning to anything — it is staying the same, still grounded in close relationships between faculty and students and among student peers.”

### **Grading policies**

After much consideration and thoughtful debate, the College has further adjusted its grading policies to give faculty and students maximum flexibility in deciding the most appropriate way to handle evaluations given the realities of the semester. Where it is impossible or very difficult to render a meaningful grade, faculty may convert their course to credit/no credit (CR/NC). All other courses will shift to pass/fail (P/F); in P/F courses, letter grades will be submitted to students and the registrar at the end of the semester but will not appear on the transcript unless requested by the student. We recognize that there are many valuable and divergent perspectives on this subject and the faculty considered them carefully in [revising our policies](#); we feel this solution best serves Kenyon students at this unprecedented time.

### **Honors Day**

Every year, Kenyon College is proud to recognize students who have achieved academic excellence, demonstrated special talents, and shown outstanding commitment to service on campus or in the larger community at our Honors Day ceremony. Despite our distance, we plan to honor our students as planned with a ceremony viewable on [Livestream](#) on Tuesday, April 14, at 11:10 a.m. EDT, or at a later time at your convenience. And while we cannot all gather in Rosse Hall as is our tradition, celebrating the achievements of our students will remain the centerpiece of this special occasion.

### **Commencement**

Kenyon College will host its 100th Commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 14, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. EDT. The ceremony will be held in Rosse Hall and will be broadcast live on YouTube.

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fabric of community, planning for a large scale event in May would be both impossible and irresponsible, given current projections for the COVID-19 crisis. We are actively working with the senior class on plans to confer their degrees from afar at the start of the summer and to celebrate their Commencement on campus at a later date. We look forward to sharing those plans as they take shape. In the meantime, we have closed the [registration form](#) for new reservations and will continue to honor cancellations and issue refunds. Please visit our [Commencement page](#) for details.

### **Room and board refunds**

We appreciate your patience as we worked through the details of how we will administer credits and refunds for the unused portion of the spring 2020 room and board fees. Most students will be eligible for a credit amounting to seven weeks of the semester's room and board fees, with adjustments for students who were in residence during spring break, or who remain on campus now, as well as for students who studied off campus this semester. Additionally, students who received need-based scholarships or grants that covered all or a portion of room and board fees, and who therefore are not eligible for a refund, will receive a grant toward living expenses while studying remotely. Credits will be applied to student accounts by April 15 as applicable. [Details](#) have been sent to the billing contact for each account.

### **Student employment**

We are committed to ensuring that students are not cut off from income they had expected to earn on campus this semester. Last week we confirmed that [we will retain current student employees](#) as remote workers, and that we will continue to pay them as regularly scheduled through May 8. We recognize that some duties will not be able to be performed from afar, but ensuring continuity of income is one way we can provide a buffer in this unsettled environment.

### **Stay-at-home order in Ohio**

Effective last Monday night, March 23, Governor DeWine issued a [stay-at-home order](#) restricting non-essential activities in the state. The order allows educational institutions to continue to provide essential services, including providing for the students who remain on campus, facilitating remote instruction and performing critical research and construction, provided that we adhere to strict safety guidelines. Kenyon does not intend to reduce staff or hours at this time; indeed, much of the work of the College will continue to be performed remotely. The extraordinary efforts made last week to get remote courses up and running and to assist nearly 1,000 students in retrieving their belongings have positioned us well for the next phase of operations.

### **Move out**

We are very grateful to the students and families who contributed to a successful and expeditious first phase of move-outs, March 18–22. There now is a moratorium on students returning to campus until at least May 1, at which point we hope to know more about COVID-19 and its impact. Last week we completed the process of packing and shipping essential items to students not able to collect their belongings in person. While the state of Ohio is under a stay-at-home order, we have suspended the process of packing, shipping and storing all other belongings. Meanwhile, College staff and local contractors are using the time to prepare and plan so we may be as efficient and thorough as possible when we are able to resume activities.

### **Latest information**

As a reminder, we are updating our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regularly. Please email us at [covid19@kenyon.edu](mailto:covid19@kenyon.edu) if you have a question that is not addressed there.

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