



LETTER TO OUR STUDENTS FROM BELONGING AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Dear Students,

We write to you out of an abundance of care, and we want you to know that we share in the sense of loss of community that you are feeling. We know that with the university closing, many of you have lost your sense of independence. You live lives here that you don't get to live at home. We also know that "home" does not have a positive connotation for all of you. We get it. It's why we do the work that we do.

But we are also writing because we are deeply concerned that some community members may be ignoring the call for social distancing, electing to continue gathering at parties and hangouts and remaining on campus longer than is required to remove their belongings and safely return home. There are also many students who are unable to leave campus, and we need to keep their chances of infection low.

As students committed to pursuing social justice and social responsibility, we want to remind you of the ways in which your individual behaviors with respect to social distancing go beyond that of the individual. In this moment, we want to press upon you that this isn't just about whether *you* will get sick. You are also returning home to your community where you have the potential to impact vulnerable friends, loved ones, and people who cannot weather this virus. You have classmates who are vulnerable. Some of us writing this message to you are vulnerable or are caring for loved ones in fragile health. In every decision you make, please bear in mind the most vulnerable people in your life -- whether they be the elderly, wage workers who cannot take time off to be sick, healthcare workers who will face unprecedented demands in the coming weeks, people without insurance, or those with underlying health conditions visible and invisible. For those of us who currently hold the privilege of good health and who have the confidence that we can weather the virus, our actions can still negatively impact those without this privilege.

In this moment, we also remind you that there are real people who are risking their own health and well-being to ensure your safe departure. As staff members who help you live and thrive on this campus, we hope you understand that if you do not take the recommendations around social distancing seriously you may be, in effect, jeopardizing our health and safety.

Here are our key messages to you:

1. **Be patient.** Things are changing rapidly, and people are working really hard to adapt as quickly as possible. There has not been a disruption of this magnitude in higher education since World War II. This is truly unprecedented, and we're going to have to be flexible and creative as we build our response.
2. **Fill out the [housing form](#) by Monday at 5:00PM.** If you would prefer to have Emory store or ship your belongings, please put that information in Question 11 and someone will work with you to make that happen. You do not have to come to campus to get your belongings. Your health and safety are the priority. The form can be found here: www.tinyurl.com/MoveOutEmory



3. **Emory asks that all non-essential assemblies (on campus and off campus) be canceled, postponed, or moved online.** We are following the CDC recommendations around social distancing (remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance approximately 6 feet from others when possible). We really want to discourage you from gathering in large groups.
4. **All BCJ spaces are closed for the remainder of the semester.** This includes the Black Student Union, Centro Latinx, the Center for Women, LGBT Life, and the Belonging and Community Justice suite in the ESC. Please email, call, or text us so that we can say our *virtual* goodbyes and see-you-laters. While many of us are still working in the office, we are also trying to keep ourselves safe and ask that you refrain from coming in. We are in the process of creating a virtual structure for meeting with students, and we will let you know once we have that figured out. In the meantime, you can contact us via email.

Finally, we want you know that we share your sense of loss and know how emotionally, physically, and financially draining this past week has been. We have been right there with you. We also had big plans for how we would round out the semester and did not imagine that our physical time together would end so abruptly. But we are working hard to create new virtual programming and are ready for the challenge. If your classes are going online, then so are our programs! Stay tuned as BCJ goes digital. Most importantly, please stay safe.

Sincerely,

Belonging and Community Justice
Center for Women
Office of LGBT Life
Office for Racial and Cultural Engagement
Social Justice Education