

## Oregon Public Universities Helping Oregon Respond to COVID-19

Executive Order 20-09, issued March 19, 2020, suspended in-person instructional activities at higher education institutions.

On March 23, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order 20-12 directing Oregonians to “Stay Home, Save Lives.”

**In accordance with both of these directives, Oregon’s public universities remain open, while facilities are closed to the general public and all non-critical employees are encouraged to work remotely.**

### FAQ

**Q: How are the universities helping the state and local communities respond to the coronavirus pandemic?**

**A:** Universities have responded rapidly and competently to slow the transmission of the novel coronavirus on campuses and are partnering with public and private entities to do the same.

- Faculty are working with media outlets and government agencies to provide data-driven information and policy approaches on nearly every topic related to COVID-19;
  - *Examples:* OSU has created an online resource of [COVID-19 experts](#).
- Students, faculty and staff are stepping up to provide volunteer services across our state.
- Contingency plans to redeploy university facilities as emergency health care centers are in place with county health departments; and
- University research departments are working with health care providers to share personal protective equipment (PPE) and key materials to expand the capacity for diagnostic and non-diagnostic testing and treatment for COVID-19.
  - *Examples:* OSU collected nearly 200,000 pairs of gloves and more than 8,000 face masks to donate to Oregon health care workers. The UO began testing the efficacy of using large autoclave (steam sterilization) to sterilize PPE. OIT has loaned over 25 ventilators from its respiratory care program to the Sky Lakes Medical Center in Klamath Falls to be distributed as needed.

**Q: Since all campuses have gone to remote learning for the entire spring term, how are universities ensuring academic continuity for students?**

**A:** Classes have been shifted from face-to-face to remote modalities at every institution for the entire Spring term. Critical supports for students such as financial aid and advising are operating remotely.

- **Access to technology and equipment:** Most campuses have check-out or loaner laptops available and campuses are assisting off-campus students with internet connectivity.
  - *Example:* The UO has made 150 Chromebooks available to students for check out. SOU loaned 40 laptops, plus microphones and webcams, to students and mailed the equipment to students so they could avoid travelling to campus.
- **Library services:** Libraries are closed to the public in accordance with EO 20-12. At UO and OSU, the libraries are essentially closed. On other campuses, libraries are open primarily to provide access to computer labs.

**Q: How are universities protecting employees?**

**A:** To the greatest extent possible, jobs are being protected and benefits are being extended to accommodate the challenges of illnesses and prolonged school closures.

The seven public universities signed a Letter of Agreement with SEIU employees ensuring all classified employees could access an additional 80 hours of COVID-19 paid leave should they need to use it in addition to regular accrued leave.

All institutions want to keep students employed when possible/feasible and are managing employment in accordance with EO 20-12, encouraging telecommuting and continued employment of critical jobs. Federal action has ensured that students in federal work study can continue to be paid up to one academic year.

- *Example:* Working with the Associated Students of Western Oregon University (ASWOU), WOU will be deploying student workers whose jobs were eliminated by the closure of campus facilities such as the Peter Courtney Health and Wellness Center or the Werner University Center. These students will be trained to contact current and future students and provide campus updates and connections.

Campuses are considering a full range of responses to the financial impacts of COVID-19 including salary cuts for highest-paid employees.

**Q: What impacts are there on student affordability, housing, and access to food?**

**A:** As indicated above, resident housing and dining services continue to support students in need.

- **Housing:** Universities will not evict any students for non-payment of rent. Campuses will do everything they can to connect students who live in off-campus housing with legal services if they want to get out of their leases early. No cancellation fees will be assessed in residence halls owned

and managed by universities. If students paid ahead for housing in a university-owned residence hall, they will get a refund.

- *Examples:* At OSU, emergency housing assistance is still available for eligible local students experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness. At SOU, students who lost off-campus housing are being accommodated on campus where possible and needed.
- **Food pantries:** Food pantries are open to students.
  - *Examples:* At OSU, the Human Services Resource Center is providing food boxes in coordination with the local food bank and has ramped up SNAP application support. At SOU, the food pantry was supplemental to the local food pantry; the on-campus pantry has shifted to a student life coordinator working remotely to help students find resources.
- **Hardship funds:** Many campuses are setting up crisis or hardship funds for students impacted by COVID-19.
  - *Examples:* The UO announced a \$1 million Students in Crisis Fund on March 30. OIT's foundation established the "Helping Owls Scholarship Fund" with funds to assist students directly impacted by COVID-19.

**Q: Are student health centers open?**

**A:** Yes. On some campuses, counseling or appointments may be limited or conducted remotely. Universities have obtained HIPAA-compliant Zoom licenses to provide tele-counseling, although there are challenges that need to be addressed related to tele-counseling across state lines.

- *Example:* WOU's Student Health and Counseling Center is providing tele-counseling to students in Oregon and is also providing COVID-19 testing to students who meet the state testing criteria.

### **Institutional links for more information**

#### **Eastern Oregon University**

Informational Webpage - <https://www.eou.edu/coronavirus/>

#### **Oregon Institute of Technology**

Informational Webpage - <https://www.oit.edu/coronavirus>

#### **Oregon State University**

Informational Webpage - <https://leadership.oregonstate.edu/coronavirus>

#### **Portland State University**

Informational Webpage - <https://www.pdx.edu/coronavirus-response>

#### **Southern Oregon University**

Informational Webpage - <https://sou.edu/campus/notifications/>

#### **University of Oregon**

Informational Webpage - <https://www.uoregon.edu/coronavirus>

#### **Western Oregon University**

Informational Webpage - <https://wou.edu/coronavirus/>

#### **Oregon Health and Science University**

Informational Webpage - <https://www.ohsu.edu/health/coronavirus-resources>