

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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*Regents of the University of Minnesota*  
*Office of the Board of Regents*

600 McNamara Alumni Center  
200 Oak Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Phone: 612-625-6300

March 25, 2020

To: President Joan T.A. Gabel   
From: Brian Steeves, Executive Director & Corporate Secretary  
Re: *Urgent Approval*

Chair Powell, Vice Chair Sviggum, and Finance & Operations Committee Chair McMillan approved your request for urgent approval of the attached Declaration of Public Health Emergency.

This information will be reported to the Finance & Operations Committee today and at the May 2020 meeting, as required by Board of Regents Policy: *Board Operations and Agenda Guidelines*.

c: Brian Burnett, Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations  
Ken Horstman, Interim Vice President, Office of Human Resources  
Katharine Bonneson, Assistant Vice President, University Health and Safety  
Bill Haldeman, Senior Assistant to the President  
Kate Stuckert, Senior Assistant to the President

## MEMORANDUM

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Kendall J. Powell  
The Honorable Steven A. Sviggum  
The Honorable David J. McMillan

Dear Members of the Board of Regents:

As you know, this afternoon Governor Walz announced a Stay at Home Order for Minnesota, effective at midnight this Friday, March 27, 2020. Upon the request of the University's Vice President for University Services and Director of Emergency Management, I am recommending Board approval to issue a Declaration of Emergency through the urgent approval process.

Since the Board will not be meeting in the near term, approval to move the University to a State of Emergency would be possible until at least April 7, 2020, under normal procedures. However, Board of Regents Policy: *Board Operations and Agenda Guidelines* specifies the requirements for an urgent procedure if an urgent situation exists as defined in the guidelines. Specifically, in Section V, Subd. 7, the policy reads as follows:

Upon recommendation of the president, the Board chair, Board vice chair, and the respective committee chair may act on behalf of the Board when delay for Board approval could have a significant impact on the University's mission or poses a considerable health, safety, or financial risk. Urgent approvals shall be used judiciously and any such approvals will be reported to the Board of respective committee upon approval and included as an information item at the next scheduled meeting, consistent with Subd. 3 of this section.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Joan T.A. Gabel  
President

## Attachments

cc: Brian Steeves, Executive Director and Corporate Secretary, Office of the Board of Regents  
Sarah Dirksen, Assistant Director, Office of the Board of Regents  
Brian Burnett, Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations  
Ken Horstman, Interim Vice President, Office of Human Resources  
Katharine Bonneson, Assistant Vice President, University Health and Safety  
Bill Haldeman, Senior Assistant to the President  
Kate Stuckert, Senior Assistant to the President

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

**WHEREAS**, the University of Minnesota System has a current public health emergency resulting from imminent health conditions caused by presence of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19);

**WHEREAS**, the University of Minnesota is a public entity within the State of Minnesota;

**WHEREAS**, the Center for Disease Control identifies the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19, and has advised that person-to-person spread of COVID-19 will continue to occur;

**WHEREAS**, the State of Minnesota has confirmed the presence of COVID-19 across the state;

**WHEREAS**, the United States, State of Minnesota, and Minnesota counties and cities that the University of Minnesota system is located in have declared a national emergency, state emergency, and local emergencies related to urgent conditions created by the presence of COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, significant community spread of COVID-19 is now a very high risk based on data from the Minnesota Department of Health and confirmed by the Minneapolis Department of Health and federal health authorities. This risk has resulted in specific recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health regarding public gatherings and a stay-at-home order from the Governor;

**WHEREAS**, the necessary resources to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic may exceed University resources available; and

**WHEREAS**, the presence of COVID-19 may have the potential to compromise the provision of essential University services, including a reduction in the size of the workforce due to school closures, isolation, or quarantine.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in alignment the State of Minnesota, I, President Joan T.A. Gabel do hereby declare a University State of Emergency and hereby direct the initiation of or, to the extent already in effect, the continuation of, the Emergency Operations Plans on each system campus.

I further declare that:

1. The emergency exists on the date of my signature below and shall continue and remain in effect as long as the State of Minnesota peacetime emergency declaration of Executive Order 20-01 remains in effect or as otherwise rescinded by me, a designee, or the Board of Regents.
2. The University of Minnesota shall, as appropriate, immediately request and coordinate the appropriate aid and resources from surrounding city and county jurisdictions, the State of Minnesota, and the United States Federal Government.
3. All University departments shall review existing University regulations, policies, or rules and be prepared to recommend the alteration, modification, or temporary suspension of same for the purpose of aiding the students, faculty, and staff during the pandemic.
4. All University departments shall evaluate and recommend resources that can be acquired and deployed for the purpose of aiding students, faculty, staff, and visitors present on system campuses or at University sites;
5. Until further notice, the University will operate and conduct its business as provided for under extended reduced operations status in Administrative Policy: *Campus and Building Closing*.

March 25, 2020

Date

Joan T.A. Gabel, President

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University Services  
Office of the Vice President

308 Morrill Hall  
100 Church Street Southeast  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-624-3557

**TO:** President Joan T.A. Gabel

**FROM:** Mike Berthelsen  
Vice President for University Services



Lisa Dressler  
Director of Emergency Management

**DATE:** March 25, 2020

**RE:** Recommendation for Declaration of Emergency and Overview of Impacts

We write to recommend you issue a University Declaration of Emergency, and provide this overview of the impacts of making such a declaration. A draft of a declaration is also included for your consideration.

To date, emergency declarations have been issued at the national and state level as well as many county and local governments in communities where the University has campuses. Big Ten peer institutions such as Ohio State and Rutgers have issued their own declarations in recent days, as have other R1 institutions similar to ours. The University's Department of Emergency Management (DEM) was notified to activate the University's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on March 12 and it is doing so in virtual mode to allow participation while maintaining social distancing.

The University has been operating under extended reduced operations since March 23, in alignment with Administrative Policy: *Campus and Building Closing* (and related appendices). A declaration of emergency would not change the status of operations and mission delivery. An emergency declaration does allow for the University to exercise all emergency measures available. Most notably, these include (1) access to financial reimbursement and (2) activation of human resources policies.

Financial. As a recognized state agency, the University system falls under the umbrella of the state for their COVID-19 declaration, with delegation to receive federal and state disaster funding under Category B. A University declaration would demonstrate that the University has utilized all of its own resources and would benefit from state and federal resources. A declared emergency also formally directs units throughout the system to track costs related to COVID-19 for potential reimbursements. It is possible that University facilities could also be called upon to serve as field hospitals or house medical personnel, incurring expenses that may also be eligible for federal and state emergency reimbursement.

Human Resources. The University has had an administrative policy in place since 2009 regarding human resources implications under a University state of emergency. An emergency declaration activates the ability to offer up to two weeks of paid emergency leave to employees. In this current situation, that is advisable due to the need for persons to self-quarantine, care for others under quarantine, or attend to school-age children who are now learning at home. It also enables the University to direct employees to work out of class and suspend some work rules (such as probationary periods and the ability to elect compensatory time off in lieu of overtime) and other programs (such as vacation donation and

layoff/nonrenewal benefit programs). These actions are reserved for the most serious of events, which is why a declaration is required to put them into place.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

cc: Bill Haldeman, Senior Assistant to the President  
Kate Stuckert, Senior Assistant to the President  
Brian Burnett, Senior Vice President, Finance and Operations  
Ken Horstman, Interim Vice President, Human Resources  
Katharine Bonneson, Assistant Vice President, University Health and Safety