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## Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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## Message from the President – April 8, 2020

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones safe and well. In these uncertain times it's important to have support, and as alumni, I hope you know you have Eagles all over the world to lean on. Our Alumni Relations team is continuing to connect with alumni across the country and you can stay involved by joining in at [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/alumni/Virtual](https://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/alumni/Virtual).

As you may have heard, Eagle Nation is mourning the loss of Senate Appropriations Chairman, alumnus and friend, Jack Hill. He was a tremendous servant leader who loved Georgia Southern. He left an indelible mark on this institution, Southeast Georgia, and the state. I was among a great many who relied on his friendship and wise counsel. We send condolences and prayers to his wife, Ruth Ann, his family and his loved ones.

Now that the University is in a fully online environment, I want to thank our faculty, staff, and students — for adapting, innovating, and connecting during these challenging times. As I said in my video message last week, I am inspired and encouraged by them!

The leadership team continues to meet daily to share real-time information, resolve issues, and develop and implement response strategies. Information and guidance continue to evolve so I wanted to highlight and acknowledge some important topics as we know them today:

- The Governor's Executive Orders on schools and shelter in place allow for continued access to remote education and maintaining essential operations for students, faculty, and staff. At this point, it does not directly impact our current status or delivery of online instruction at Georgia Southern. We will continue to implement our current telework and flexible work strategies so that only a minimum number of staff are on campus to maintain operations and support remote instruction.
- May and summer semester terms will be delivered online, via remote instruction. We are working to update our course offerings in this mode of delivery with a goal of providing a full slate of opportunities for our students to continue progress toward their degrees.
- Student refunds will be processed this week and should be issued by April 10. The combined refunds of housing, dining and fees will be more than \$11 million to our students. We know how important it is to get these funds back into the hands of our students during this time.
- Understanding the importance of each paycheck for many of our students, I am very proud of our commitment to keeping our student workers employed through our supervisors' creativity in moving tasks and job duties to online and remote environments so that we can continue to meet our operational goals while supporting our students.
- Operation Move-Out was an emotionally difficult process, but tactically very successful as we quietly and quickly moved out more than 4,500 students from our residence halls. Currently, we have approximately 210 students remaining in housing. We are taking special care to accommodate social distancing and access to meals for those students remaining in housing. I want to thank the housing staff and volunteers for their incredible work in this effort.
- Our Health Services, led by Dr. Brian DeLoach, continues to operate on both campuses, screening students and providing testing if necessary. I am very grateful to Dr. DeLoach and his team for their outstanding level of service and care for our students.
- We are accommodating needs for teleworking, flex scheduling and leave requests to ensure our faculty and staff are safe and able to navigate care needs for their loved ones.
- We have transitioned more than 5,500 courses online. This is nothing short of heroic! Thank you, to our faculty and students, for their innovation and adaptation!!!
- Spring Commencement plans are underway and will offer three opportunities to honor our students. [Details can be found here](#). Please know that our students are invited to participate in both the virtual ceremony AND an in-person ceremony, and we hope that they will participate in both formats! I do want to acknowledge the entire team that has been producing the virtual ceremony...it's going to be really cool!
- We continue to monitor and interpret the impact of the Federal Stimulus packages to help institutions of higher education through these uncertain economic times. We will know more about the budget in the coming months and will keep you updated.
- For my Eagle Nation spotlight, I would like to highlight a group of people who continue to soar above and beyond: the crews who keep our students fed and who keep our campuses clean. While most of us have been able to conduct our work remotely for the last few weeks, there are employees who continue to show up to ensure we can still support our students and remain operational. My thanks to each of them for the pivotal role they play at Georgia Southern.

So — these are only a few of the top-of-mind topics. Please let us know what other questions you may have.

Mostly, I want you all to know and acknowledge to each other that it's okay to feel uneasy, unsure, and even a little disheartened. Personally, I miss you all so much...I'm a people person and I miss the face-to-face interaction with my colleagues, our alumni and, most importantly, our students who bring our campuses to life.

Please take the time to care for each other, support each other, and follow all health safety guidance. Remember, it is our people (you), that make Georgia Southern great. So, take care of yourself, my friends. We need each other!

Sincerely,  
Kyle