

As we near the end of our second week of instruction in an online learning environment for our ground students due to the coronavirus, I couldn't be more proud of what is taking place at Grand Canyon University.

- Our 20,000-plus ground students are highly engaged in their online classes and are producing high quality work.
- The faculty have done a fantastic job transitioning to this modality, many working through spring break to get their courses ready for students.
- Our counselors are having ongoing communications with their students to ensure they are staying on track.
- And our back-office teams continue to make sure that everything from financial aid and accounting to IT and academic records runs smoothly.

This has occurred while more than 90% of our employees are now safely working from home during the coronavirus pandemic, which is a testament to the state-of-the-art technologies we have put in place over the past 12 years.

As a leader in online education with more than 85,000 students studying remotely, GCU was well prepared for this challenge. This was not a case of moving students online and hoping that instructors would figure it out independently and provide a pass/fail grade just to get through the semester – as is referenced in [this Inside Higher Ed article](#). Rather, we have been able to maintain the same continuity of instruction and learning, the same educational outcomes, the same small class sizes and the same curriculum within the same learning management system that students had already grown accustomed to utilizing in their on-campus classes. Those systems, processes and support were already in place because the hybrid technological infrastructure that sustains both the ground and online campuses, as well as the people who support those, are built on the same cultural foundation in which the student experience is the central focus.

Our provost, Dr. Hank Radda, our deans, our faculty and people like Dr. Jean Mandernach, who oversees GCU's Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, have been at the forefront of not only incorporating those technologies into an online classroom, but also testing and researching them in order to assess learning outcomes based on that technology.

In other words, we are as well prepared to respond to this unprecedented time as any institution in the country.

We've already made the decision to move summer classes on GCU's campus to an online learning environment. We fully expect on-campus classes to resume this fall and can't wait to welcome our students back. However, if the coronavirus pandemic has not subsided by that time, we have the flexibility to continue delivering high-quality coursework in an online modality to ensure that returning students stay on track to complete their degrees and new students are able to begin that pursuit without interruption.

Financially, we know the coronavirus pandemic has put a lot of stress on families. GCU is providing credit for unused room and board fees in the spring semester as well as for summer housing deposits, and that will also hold true for the fall semester should the coronavirus pandemic continue. Since GCU is not reliant on state taxpayer money (which could be impacted by the current decline in the economy and result in higher tuition rates at public universities), our pricing structure is another commitment GCU families can trust will stay consistent. While there are minimal increases for room and board next year, those costs remain substantially below averages at public and private universities. And GCU has not raised tuition on its ground campus for 12 straight years – which is unheard of in higher education and will continue to be a priority for the University.

We look forward to a time in the fall when we can have our spring semester graduates return to campus to participate in commencement ceremonies that had to be postponed. A new date has not been finalized as yet,

but the ceremonies will be an opportunity to reunite with classmates and celebrate the accomplishments our graduates worked so hard to achieve.

In the meantime, there is no question that things are going to change in America as a result of this pandemic. Our lives are going to be different. That creates challenges, but it also creates opportunities. We will continue to meet those challenges head-on, be thankful for the incredible things GCU's students, faculty and staff have already accomplished, and ask for God's guidance moving forward.

I firmly believe that, because of the infrastructure and people that are already in place as well as the Christian spirit that pervades this university, GCU will come out of this even stronger.

View President Mueller's video message to ground students [here](#).