

The Harvard Crimson

THE UNIVERSITY DAILY, EST. 1873 | VOLUME CXLVII NO. 34 | CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

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Harvard's choice to close its doors gives us deep reason for worry

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Women's basketball halts losing streak Friday, then loses to Yale



CORONAVIRUS SENDS STUDENTS HOME

Students Must Vacate, Classes Move Online

By THE CRIMSON NEWS STAFF

All Harvard courses will move to remote instruction beginning March 23 as a result of a growing global coronavirus outbreak, University President Lawrence S. Bacow announced in an email Tuesday morning. The University will also ask students not to return from spring break.

"Students are asked not to return to campus after Spring Recess and to meet academic requirements remotely until further notice," Bacow wrote in the email.

"Students who need to remain on campus will also receive instruction remotely and must prepare for severely limited on-campus activities and interactions. All graduate students will transition to remote work wherever possible," Bacow added.

The move follows both similar decisions at other Ivy League universities in recent days and rapid changes on campus.

As the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Massachusetts rises, events and venues across Harvard's campus have closed, travel restrictions have tightened, and University affiliates have questioned how the disease will affect life and work on campus.

Harvard has seen similarly seismic changes to operations only in wartime.

Spring recess officially begins this Saturday and concludes on March 22.

The next day, students will attend classes virtually — a possibility Harvard University Health Services director Giang T. Nguyen and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Claudine Gay first publicly raised at a faculty meeting earlier this month.

Since then, tabs for the on-line meeting platform Zoom have cropped up on course websites and many faculty have tested it with their classes.

Bacow wrote Monday that Harvard will now strongly discourage gatherings of more than 25 people, a change from the previous guidance to rethink events of 100 or more.

"Despite our best efforts to bring the University's resources to bear on this virus, we are still faced with uncertainty—and the considerable unease brought on by uncertainty," Bacow wrote.

"It will take time for researchers, a good many of them

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On Tuesday morning, Harvard University announced the upcoming transition to virtual instruction for graduate and undergraduate classes. A student waits with his belongings in preparation for vacating campus outside of Leverett House Tuesday morning. JONATHAN G. YUAN—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER



Harvard College students were notified to vacate their houses and dorms by March 15, five days away. RYAN N. GAJARAWALA—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

Rapid Move-Outs Bring Challenges

By JULIET E. ISSELBACHER and AMANDA Y. SU
CRIMSON STAFF WRITERS

Most days, Jordan H. Barton '23 wakes up in his Canaday dorm to a 9:30 a.m. alarm.

On Tuesday, though, he woke up earlier. His phone was ringing as he began receiving a flood of texts informing him Harvard College would require undergraduates to vacate campus by Sunday to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"To wake up in the morning and receive what can only be called an eviction notice is something that only invalidates what the school's mission has stated since they've been inducted," Barton said.

Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana wrote to Barton and more than 6,000 other undergraduates on Tuesday morning that campus would not

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The Owl, a final club, hosted a day party following the notification of the decision to evacuate campus. RYAN N. GAJARAWALA—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

Faculty Prepare for Web Teaching

By JAMES S. BIKALES
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Harvard's response to the novel coronavirus Tuesday triggered perhaps one of the largest sudden pedagogical shifts in University history, as undergraduates are required to move off campus and classes transition to an online format.

In the wake of the changes, several Harvard faculty members said that, while they still need to iron out several details,

they felt largely prepared to deliver classes online for the rest of the semester.

The University announced a number of measures to reduce risk to affiliates in emails Tuesday, including transitioning to online learning, canceling gatherings of more than 25 people, and requiring that College students vacate their dorms by Sunday.

Last week, Dean of the

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Experts Support Response to Virus

By FIONA K. BRENNAN
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Public health experts largely support the University's decision to transition to remote instruction and restrict students' presence on campus as the global coronavirus outbreak grows.

University President Lawrence S. Bacow and Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana informed students of the measures in a series of emails Tuesday morning. Khurana asked undergraduates to vacate their rooms no later than Sunday March 15 at 5 p.m. and begin attending courses virtually on March 23, the first day of sched-

uled classes after spring recess.

As of Tuesday evening, there were 973 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 29 deaths in the United States. Governor Charlie D. Baker '79 declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts Tuesday, after the number of coronavirus cases doubled overnight to 92.

To date, there are nine reported cases in Boston but none on Harvard's campus.

Harvard School of Public Health epidemiology professor Donald A. Goldmann said that while Harvard's decision to send students home was

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Schools Unveil Contingency Plans for Virus

By JAMES S. BIKALES, MICHELLE G. KURILLA, and RUOQI ZHANG
CRIMSON STAFF WRITERS

Administrators from across Harvard's 12 degree-granting schools and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study sent school-specific instructions and reassurances to students Tuesday following University President Lawrence S. Bacow's announcement that Harvard would move to remote instruction beginning March 23 as a result of the growing coronavirus outbreak.

Bacow's announcement, which also stipulated that students not return to campus



A Harvard undergraduate talks on the phone in the Science Center Plaza Tuesday morning, reacting to the University's early morning decision. JONATHAN G. YUAN—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

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Unions Reply to Closures

Three unions say they are making contingency plans and cancelling events after Harvard's announcement that it will send undergrads home and move to on-line classes.

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Seniors Party Before Packing



Harvard seniors spent time with friends in dining halls and at outdoor parties on Tuesday after receiving the news that their final semester would be cut short.

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Intl. Students React to News

International students at the College spent Tuesday questioning the status of their visas, working to secure housing, and wondering how different time zones will impact online class.

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Mass. Declares Emergency

Governor Charlie D. Baker '79 declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts on Tuesday after the number of reported cases of coronavirus in the state jumped to 92.

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Unions Respond to Univ. Closures

By **DAVIT ANTONYAN**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Three of Harvard’s labor unions are forming contingency plans and cancelling events after Harvard announced Tuesday that it would send undergraduates home for the remainder of the semester and hold classes online due to the global coronavirus outbreak. The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers — the largest union on campus — is working to ensure its members do not lose pay should the University further shutter its operations, according to HUCTW President Carrie Barbash.

We want to ensure that no members experience any kind of pay loss as a result of choices Harvard is making about staying open or closing.

Carrie Barbash
HUCTW President

“We want to ensure that no members experience any kind of pay loss as a result of choices Harvard is making about staying open or closing, and that everyone has adequate sick time to either care for themselves or their family members,” Barbash said. The Harvard University Security, Parking, and Museum Guards Union, meanwhile, is preparing for a tumultuous week ahead as students move out from their dorms. HUSPMGU President Curt E. Rheault said the union would be treating the remaining five days like the end of a traditional school year. “On the parking side, we’re considered essential personnel, so we’ve been asked to treat this week as the move-out for everybody,” he said. Rheault added he is con-

cerned the closure could cause “about 60% of our overtime to be gone.” Harvard’s graduate student union cancelled its scheduled work-in on Thursday and announced it would stop holding mass events following a University-wide email announcing that classes will move online beginning March 23. The announcement comes amid contentious contract negotiations between the University and Harvard Graduate Students Union-United Automobile Workers. HGSU-UAW wrote in an email to members that it would remain committed to addressing the needs of its members, even as Harvard prepares to move online. In the email, the union demanded Harvard ensure that student workers not lose pay amid the closure; provide paid sick leave; address their immigration concerns; cover the costs of coronavirus testing for them; and reimburse their travel expenses. “We have drafted a list of steps the administration should take to immediately protect the health and well-being of student workers,” the email read. University spokesperson Jonathan L. Swain said the University is working to address a number of concerns raised in the union’s email related to the threat of coronavirus. “As President Bacow stated in his message to the community, the decision announced today by the University around virtual instruction is aimed at limiting exposure of members of our community to the coronavirus,” Swain said. “There are a wide range of concerns the University is working to address in the coming days and weeks related to this decision and the ongoing public health emergency, among those are some that were also raised by HGSU-UAW,” Swain added.

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Sudden Move-Outs Pose Unexpected Issues

reopen after spring break, which stretches from March 14 to 22. Within hours, the email sent students scrambling to pack up all their belongings and make plans to vacate. But Barton and others say it hit one group of undergraduates particularly hard: first-generation and low-income students, many of whom depend upon Harvard for food, housing, and stability. “They’ve been evicted from their stability, they’ve been evicted from their homes, they’ve been evicted from their ability to live comfortably and safely,” Barton, who is an FGLI student, said. “There’s already enough concern, and now they’re concerned about being able to get home and have stable housing and food.” Some students must ship or store their on-campus belongings without financial support from Harvard. Others who planned to stay on campus must now book unexpected flights home and accrue additional costs. And those who rely on term-time employment must confront additional financial concerns as they lose their primary sources of income. Nicholas T. “Nick” Wyville ’20 called the College’s announcement “outrageous,” adding that he believes it will weigh most heavily on him and his fellow FGLI students. “Harvard prides itself on having a massive student body that is a large percentage on financial aid,” Wyville said. “I think that they forget that those are the same students who often come from home situations that are uncomfortable.” The financial burdens of leaving campus this week will disproportionately affect first-generation, low-income students at Harvard who cannot foot these abrupt costs, according to Primus, a group for FGLI students at the College. “While many students can handle unexpected costs, this sudden change in housing highlights the large disparity within our student population concerning students’ access to disposable wealth and the re-

sources necessary to evacuate and move off-campus,” the group wrote in a statement emailed to its members. First-generation students constitute 15 percent of Harvard’s undergraduate population; more than 20 percent of students are on full financial aid at the College, according to Primus’s statement. James A. Bedford ’20 — who is on full financial aid — said he usually holds several jobs at Harvard simultaneously in order to support himself, working roughly 15 to 20 hours a week. His roles have included serving as a Peer Advising Fellow, a Learning Lab Fellow at the the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, and an instructor for SCRB 78: “Science Communication,” among others. “I haven’t even been able to think about the realities of the lost income and the money that I won’t be able to make,” he said. University President Lawrence S. Bacow announced in an email Tuesday morning that all Harvard courses will move to online instruction beginning March 23. However, Wyville — who hails from Anniston, Ala. — said online courses are not feasible for him and some of his peers from rural or low-income areas, where many homes do not have internet access. “It’s not as if we can just like up and go to the library or the coffee shop every day,” he said. “The only equalizer at Harvard is the fact that we all live together and have the same accommodation. We live together, we eat the same food, we have the same faculty resources,” Wyville added. “But if you take away campus living and residential life then you take away that equalizer.” While Eric Olvera ’23 expected Harvard would transition to online classes as a result of the coronavirus, he said he was shocked when he learned he had just five days to leave Cambridge. Olvera had planned a series of flights between Hawaii, Boston, and his home in Idaho based on the regular academic calendar. He then

planned to return to Boston for the summer. “All of these flights total up to about \$700. That’s like half my net worth,” Olvera said. Olvera said he was unsure whether he could get refunds from the airlines or receive financial assistance from Harvard to cover sunk costs. Similarly, some students have been forced to make substantial efforts to afford last-minute flights home. “I just paid an entire paycheck to get a plane ticket home on the shortest notice possible,” Barton said. Faced with financial, logistical, and personal challenges Tuesday, students and University affiliates have attempted to cobble together makeshift solutions. In wake of the announcement, many students offered their homes to peers who require housing via a Google spreadsheet that connects undergraduates seeking housing with those who can provide it. As of Tuesday night, over 80 students signed up on the spreadsheet, including information about the number of beds they have available. Others have called on Harvard administrators to offer students greater support. Barton, Olvera, and several other students penned an open letter to the administration Tuesday on behalf of a new student group, Harvard Undergraduates for Decent and Urgent Accommodations. The letter condemns administrators for demanding students make sudden travel plans that “exhaust” their resources and put unexpected financial pressure on their families, as well as process “tremendously expensive” shipping fees. “The nature of financial struggle is one of inaccess,” the letter reads. “Being asked to fully move out and ship our rooms away with no system of subsidies and on-campus, accessible storage makes this issue undeniable.” “These are costs that Harvard cannot mediate, and in such, a timely notice with com-

prehensive subsidies was necessary,” the letter further stated. Primus’s leaders wrote that they are focused on continuing to communicate with affected students and working with administrators and alumni to connect students with additional resources. In its open letter, HUDUA demanded that Harvard open its petitioning process to remain on campus to economically disadvantaged students. They further asked that Harvard increase subsidies towards, as well as the availability of, urgent, on-campus storage facilities before the evacuation deadline. The College is currently not offering any on-campus storage to students.= The letter has more than 100 student signatories as of Tuesday evening, according to Barton. College spokesperson Rachael Dane wrote in a statement that, per Khurana’s email to students, Harvard’s commitment to the health of its affiliates and its responsibilities to the “larger community” guided the decision. “Public health experts have advised us that the best way to delay the virus transmission and to contain any breakout is to decrease the number of people on our campus, and as a result, the decision was made in a timely manner and communicated as soon as it could be,” Dane wrote. In his email, Khurana wrote the College understands students will face challenges and that faculty and staff will implement plans to support students during the transition. “I do not take lightly the apprehension and disappointment you will experience with this news,” he wrote. “As you deal with the uncertainty of these unexpected challenges, I hope you will be gentle and respectful with others and with yourselves so that we can meet these challenges in ways that will reflect the College at its best.” juliet.isselbacher@thecrimson.com amanda.su@thecrimson.com



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