

From: [Provost](#)
To: [HOF-FACULTY](#)
Subject: A Message from Hofstra's Student Government Association
Date: Monday, April 27, 2020 1:39:26 PM

The three of us received the following important letter from Katherine Harley, SGA President.

Sincerely,
Herman A . Berliner
Caniano
Provost
Senate Executive Committee

William

Chair,

University
Senate

George Giuliani
Speaker of the Faculty
University Senate

A Message from the Student Government Association

Dear Hofstra University Faculty,

We, the students elected into Hofstra's Student Government Association (SGA) working on behalf of our constituents of Hofstra University, write to the faculty, particularly our professors, to express concerns and obstacles facing the student body as we navigate this new learning environment.

COVID-19 has affected the Hofstra Community shifting routines and the basic trajectories of daily life. Almost everyone knows someone who has personally been a victim to the virus, or who has experienced this themselves. As the virus progresses, we must brace ourselves for the immense impact that the consequences of the virus will have on the lives of our students. Many loved ones will be lost and other methods of support must be readily available to help work through this difficult time.

Everyone, students and faculty alike, are making extreme life adjustments as they are learning and teaching in a new environment. With this comes different ways of coping with the stress, depending on what works best for the individual and while following the CDC's guidelines of social distancing.

As Hofstra's spring semester has moved online with classes and programming, there have been a multitude of disruptions to our personal lives and more pressing matters we as students must attend to, on top of the online scheduled classes. Inspired by the letter written by SUNY New Paltz students to their faculty, Hofstra's SGA wanted to identify the following concerns expressed by the undergraduate student body:

We have many Hofstra students, both within the US and internationally, who reside in time zones on very different schedules than New York. This results in a severe disruption to their daily schedule and sleep cycle as they are forced to stay up at all hours in order to attend their classes.

We have Hofstra students who were forced to move back home or to live in personal living situations which can be toxic to their mental health, as they feel unsafe residing there.

We have Hofstra students who do not have access to wifi at their homes or may have trouble using the technology necessary to attend Zoom classes and participate in Blackboard discussions.

We have Hofstra students who are deemed essential workers and are being subjected to the dangers of COVID-19, most likely while working extra hours. We also have students who have lost their jobs or whose parents have lost their jobs, who are now struggling with the basic costs of living.

We have Hofstra students who are experiencing a loved one testing positive, or who are sick themselves. We also have students who are not able to get tested due to the limitations in availability and location.

We appreciate all the changes which professors have made regarding changing the format of their classes and making adjustments to assignments. What we ask is for this to be clearly stated within the updated syllabus and shared with all students. We ask for professors to be lenient with deadlines and grading, as there are sometimes personal situations which are out of the control of students and lead to late work. We ask professors to take the time to connect with students before class and have a conversation regarding any uncertainties they have, as well as doing a health check on their students and their families. We ask for professors to provide opportunities for students to share their experiences with them through different mediums without their privacy being compromised. We ask for professors to give their students the opportunity

to feel comfortable sharing their stories, whether through the Zoom call itself or through the chat function and email, but not to pry into their personal lives. Not everything needs an explanation regarding a student's personal life and how their classwork is affected. We also ask for professors to feel comfortable enough to open up to their classes about any uncertainties they have themselves regarding this environment. We are all human and we are all experiencing a pandemic which none of us have experienced before, and having so much unknown is scary.

We are all in this together as members of the Hofstra Pride and we will get through this. We must rely on each other and continue to foster welcoming communities for all of our students and faculty. We must stay #HofstraStrong.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Harley
President
Hofstra's Student Government Association

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