

March 11, 2020

Dear Campus Student:

The coronavirus is on everyone's minds and I am writing to provide an update on Sofia University's response to this growing health emergency. Although the University has had no reported cases of community members testing positive or knowingly coming in contact with others who have tested positive, it seems prudent to re-evaluate our practices for the next few weeks. Therefore, after consultation with my colleagues, I have determined that all campus-based classes will hold their synchronous meetings using Zoom technology. You may already be familiar with Zoom: it is a user-friendly way of conducting virtual meetings, and has the capacity for seeing your fellow participants in real time, placing documents on screen for review, and recording for later playback.

Your faculty member has been assigned a Zoom classroom, and will shortly communicate with you about the room number. You'll be provided with a URL that you can click on at the appointed hour. You yourself do not have to have a Zoom account to enter the classroom, though downloading the app on your computer or smart phone will make accessing the class somewhat easier.

For those international students concerned about SEVIS regulations, I have been assured by our VP for Global Strategy that there are no problems with this alternative to face-to-face meeting. The university is required to file documentation about this change but there is nothing you need to do.

New updates:

- All residential classes scheduled for the Palo Alto campus from March 11 until the end of the quarter have been moved to Zoom classrooms. Classes are not cancelled, and Canvas will not be used to replace the scheduled face-to-face class time. Instead, classes will be conducted via Zoom teleconferencing. If you have not received information about the Zoom classroom meetings, please reach out to your instructor.
- The seminars (for MATP and PhD students) and intensives (MATP) have been modified, and will not be conducted in Palo Alto. Here too, faculty will meet with students through Zoom. If you do not receive meeting invitations for the Zoom classes, please reach out to your Program Chair (jennifer.crane@sofia.edu) or faculty advisor.
- Students who have paid a deposit for the retreat center for the seminars will receive a refund.

- For students for the spring quarter, Orientation will be held remotely via Zoom. The Dean of Student Services (rosalie.cook@sofia.edu) will shortly send announcements about the schedule and Zoom information for these Orientation meetings.

Should you have any questions about this announcement, please reach out to your professor and/or student_services@sofia.edu.

I regret learning of the increasing number of coronavirus cases in the Bay Area and across the globe. I believe the course of action the University is taking is appropriate given the potential health risk. Please reach out to your professor should you have any questions about meetings for the last two weeks of classes.

Stuart J. Sigman, Ph.D.
Provost and Chief Academic Officer

