Statement from the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area on Extending Regional Public Health Emergency and Stay-at-Home Orders

The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area strongly supports the actions by Mayor Bowser, northern Virginia, and Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties in Maryland in extending their respective public health emergency and stay-at-home orders. These decisions are based on evidence that the spread of Covid-19 continues in these areas, and on prioritizing the health and safety of residents.

All of us in the Consortium feel the effects of this pandemic. Our hearts go out to those who have lost family and friends and to the many who have contracted this disease. We pray for healing for all. We also acknowledge that although Covid-19 affects everyone, African American and Latinx communities have been disproportionately represented, especially in deaths. We urge our leaders to keep these statistics in mind in their decision making.

We are deeply grateful for the sacrifices being made every day by those essential workers who make the choice to go to work and safeguard our health and our access to food and other necessary items. We see them on our campuses and in our medical facilities. Their families are also making tremendous sacrifices that we must not forget.

We also understand firsthand the effects of Covid-19 on the businesses in our region. As major employers, our institutions and the thousands of faculty and staff who are the foundation of our work have been seriously affected financially as well. The long-term recovery of our region will need comprehensive approaches that support the college and university communities that are integral to the area’s educational, economic, and cultural fabric. We look forward to working with our regional leaders on these issues going forward.

The first priority for the Consortium, our members, and the entire Washington, DC region is for the continued health and safety of our communities—of students, employees, and all who live and work in the region—as the critical pathway to economic recovery for everyone. For this
reason, we support the actions of the regional governments, and ask that they continue to work together to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to reopening that reflects this priority.

In the meantime, please continue to follow CDC and regional Departments of Health guidelines on how to protect yourself and others during this challenging time. You can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Avoiding close contact with others and practicing social distancing.
- Washing your hands regularly, with soap and water for at least 20-seconds -- and keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Maintaining sanitized surfaces in your home.
- Covering your sneeze or cough to protect others around you.
- And wearing a facemask that covers your nose and mouth while in public spaces.

Let’s further the collective effort to protect ourselves and our loved ones against Covid-19.

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