- Third on the COVID-19 website. So please for those who know others who couldn't participate at that time, at this time, please share that information. In the first half hour, we'll hear from a few of the many university leaders, academic leaders, administrative leaders, Shared Governance leaders who had been actively involved in the campus response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the second half hour, these leaders and others will respond to questions submitted all week long and throughout this webcast by faculty, staff, and students. We will probably only get to a small number of questions during this webcast, but if you have left or will leave your email address, we will be sure that all questions are answered in one form or another. And it is now my great pleasure to welcome President Hrabowski who will speak to us from his home office about the values guiding the campus response to the COVID-19 pandemic. President Hrabowski.

- Thanks, Lisa. Hi, everybody, it's Freeman Hrabowski. I wanna thank all of you for everything you're doing to support each other. We have been amazed by the value of community during this period. Faculty here are working really hard with staff to support our students. Students are working hard helping each other. Let me thank the people in Institutional Technology and in Institutional Advancement for the work they've done to facilitate this. Thank you, Lisa, for what you're doing. You're gonna be hearing today from the leaders of the campus, and that begins with our student leaders at the undergrad and grad level, the faculty leaders, the staff leaders, and members of the Crisis Management Team, Executive Team, a couple of our vice presidents. So when we talk about Shared Governance, it's important to know we are talking about students, faculty, and staff. Two or three points. Many things are up in the air as you know. The stimulus bill, the state is trying to see what that will mean for us, what kind of support it will give. Number two, the governor and our state are both being very supportive of higher education. We're working with them, we're working our chancellor and the system. And many of the times when we have to make decisions, they are made in concert with other campuses in different ways, so keep that thought. And then finally, I want us to always remember our values. To the students on the call, we've been through tough times before. Two of the most important values. The values we talk about first. Number one, people. People count. We start with our students. We care about you. We will be here. We know it's a challenging time for you. We'll keep addressing your issues. And then faculty and staff, we believe in supporting the people. Anybody's been around UNBC long enough will know we stick together in these times and others. So remember that idea of community, of Shared Governance, of the importance of the academics, it's always about the academics and the people, people coming first. And then finally, I want us to listen carefully to the responses of the different experts and our shared leadership people. We'll be working to address your issues. Patience and understanding that we're all working as hard as we can and we'll continue to do that to support all of us. It's UNBC together. With that, I'm delighted to turn it
over to our Provost Philip Rous.

- Thank you very much, Freeman. And thank you for joining us today, and for you sharing your ideas, and your comments, and for engaging in the conversation that we're going to have today. First, I wanted to express my sincere thanks to our students, faculty, and staff as we work together as a community through these challenging times. I thought what I'd like to do today is organize my brief remarks in terms of some of the, I guess you could call them the fundamental principles that are guiding both our decisions and actions in response to the COVID-19 crisis. I know as you all understand, first and foremost, we must be doing everything possible to protect the safety and the health of all members of our community. And we also recognize that by doing this, we are also doing our part as a community to protect our broader community and our families. Now, this of course involves some difficult but critically important decisions and actions. We recognize that those decisions also have a very significant impact on our students, our faculty, and our staff. So in all of this, it's really imperative that we do all we can to I suppose mitigate the impact of these necessary and urgent changes on all members of our community. And to do this, we're guided by the fundamental principles that reflect the shared values that we have always held to as a community. Principles such as supporting all of our students in successfully progressing through their academic programs and completing their degrees on-time to the extent possible providing flexibility through modifications, for example, of academic policies and procedures, to support the academic careers of our students and also the career goals of our faculty and staff. UMBC has always benefited from our collective commitment to Shared Governance. And despite the urgency of many of these actions and decisions that we have taken and will take, wherever possible we consult the Council, and when appropriate, the approval of our Shared Governance bodies. And so I want to say how very grateful I am to our Shared Governance leader teams for all they've done and their continued commitment to support our community through Shared Governance and through these very difficult times. Now, I know we've had many questions, and many of those questions are related to grading policy. So what I'd like to do is to have Dean Katharine Cole and then Dean Rutledge speak specifically to that matter. So I'd now like to recognize Katharine Cole who is our dean of undergraduate education.

- Thank you, Dr. Rous. And thank you all, all the students and faculty and staff who have worked so diligently through these very, very challenging times. I want to assure everyone that the grading policies and the academic policies that we are developing and continue to develop are based on informing and empowering our students to make the best individual decisions they can about their grades this spring. I wanted to briefly, very briefly talk a bit about the policies and then what we will be doing moving forward. So in essence, in their most basic form these policies have extended deadlines for both withdraw
and pass/fail grading to June 10th, so that students could see their final grade before they need to make a decision about pass/fail. We've also allowed passing grades to count for general education courses. We have received many questions. I've answered many questions. And we acknowledge the concerns of our students about P or passing grades counting in the major and satisfying prerequisites. While we do not have a definitive answer at this time, I can assure you all that we are working seven days a week very diligently trying to find a solution that will allow students to move forward in their major and move forward in their coursework, but also just as importantly, successfully move forward in their major and their coursework. So what I can assure all students is that they will know what the policies are well before they have to make any decisions about what options they choose for their grades. So I encourage students to talk to the Academic Success Center staff, to their academic advisors in preparation for making decisions on their grades in June. And you will be hearing again from us as we work through the resolutions to help all of our students this spring.

- Dean Rutledge.

- Good afternoon, everyone. At the graduate level, we have paralleled the policy of allowing students to change the grading method to pass/fail or to withdraw from classes up until June 10th. One major difference at the graduate level is that in order to change the grading method to pass, you must first get approval from the faculty advisor, the graduate program director, and the associate dean of the graduate school. And this is necessary because there are many circumstances under which graduate students may not want to change their grading method, and we want to make sure that students fully understand all of the circumstances before a final decision is made about changing the grading basis. We're also very pleased that we have had several students successfully complete their master's thesis PhD dissertation defenses virtually. We were able to get many of the forms converted to either DocuSign or Adobe Sign so that everything can be done fully virtually. And so I think that we're pleased to see that that is going smoothly and people are continuing to progress toward graduation. We also want to bring to your attention that we've posted resources that are available for students who are on the graduate assistant or the standard student health insurance plans, particularly in this time of dealing with COVID-19. And so all of these policies are available on the grad school homepage and also on the university's COVID-19 website. We've also posted several strategies for students who are not able to fully access their labs to be able to continue doing their research and making progress toward graduation goals, and those are also available on the graduate school's website. So we're doing all we can to help support your success, and if there are things that we can do to help you, we look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.
Thank you, Dean Rutledge. And now I'd like to hand over to Dr. Nancy Young, who is our vice president for student affairs. Dr. Young.

Hi, everyone. Thank you, Philip, Dr. Rous. Good afternoon, Retrievers. I know we're sharing a lot of information this afternoon, but I don't know if you're like me speaking to you in your homes from my home. We've made it to the second week, and we knew we're all trying to figure this out together and showing extreme patience with each other during that first week. We're starting to settle in now, and I think we all just need to celebrate, even these small little milestones of where we are together. As Dr. Rous mentioned, we had as our first and foremost principle, whether that was working with health and counseling, or thinking about the move outs from residence halls, and how commuters were going to be able to come in back and forth. Safety has been key. But we also know that safety is in our community. We're an amazing group of people that often alert each other when someone else needs care. And I've been delighted to work with student leaders for the past few weeks who have consistently been letting us know what we're doing well, where we need help. I have loved the parents on their Listserv, letting us know when something wasn't clear. And whether you're on the phone right now or whether you're in this video chat on your own video screen watching us, we just appreciate the ways this community continues to come together. And so in addition to safety, one of our second principles have been connection outside of the classroom. So you will see that we have our counseling services up and running now for current clients. And we have an emergency call-in system for new clients. We've been able to work out things across state lines to be able to get that operating. We've been able to put an after-hours phone-a-med system in for 24 hours services. And we know that those were some of the most important things to you. But in addition, we've been hearing from our seniors how worried they are about getting jobs and about almost the grief they're feeling. And so you'll hear in a little bit through some of our questions about some of the activities we're doing. We're looking for ways to put some of our traditional bingo games online. The career center is up and running, and we're proud to be one of the earliest schools in the country to get that service up online, because we know how concerned you are about continuing work. So I am just absolutely delighted from whether it has been our academic colleagues and our Shared Governance working closely with Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association, trying to think through not only your safety, but about our psychological safety and what it feels like to stay together in this amazing community we share. And I'll be happy to answer other questions as we move on. One of the things you'll also hear a little later is that we are also looking at financial ways to support our students. And several years ago, our Student Government Association with great foresight started a Stay Black and Gold Fund. And we've been able to work with OAI partners, and so it's a great segue to introduce Frances Watson, our president of the Student Government Association, to talk a little bit about what students are
experiencing. So enjoy passing it on to Frances Watson.

- Thank you, Nancy. So as she talked about, the Stay Black and Gold Fund is something that SGA is excited to be working on. But we as students have definitely been experiencing the differences from classes being online to technology and resources and using different platforms. So I think that the last two weeks have been a really good adjustment period for students to get acclimated to their new environment. In addition to focusing on the new grading policies that have allowed students to get that pressure off and focus more on their grades until the end of the semester. And just thinking about how to get through the rest of the semester now. It was similar to syllabus week. So we're thinking, okay, how do I approach this semester for now? Alex.

- Good afternoon, everyone. We at the Graduate Student Association are working really hard to make sure that graduate students are as comfortable as possible during this challenging time. One of the things we want to be clear to students is that we at the GSA are all still actively working, albeit it from home. But that includes our staff, our student workers, and our senators. And the Executive Council is actively meeting with various administrators and campus officials to make sure that we're all in the loop and for all the constantly evolving updates. I also want to emphasize that our writing advisor Zach Tucker is still doing appointments virtually. In fact, last I heard he has just as many appointments this month during the closure as we had last year. So he's still doing well and very active. And if you wanna make an appointment with him, you can do that, just be aware that's he's at a bit of a backlog probably at this point. Unfortunately, we've had to at this point cancel all of our research and travel grant reimbursements and the request for funding. This is due to the obvious travel ban and the limitation of campus staff to process reimbursements. For students that already were approved and already traveled, we are working as hard as we can to get your money reimbursed, but it will take some time for that to clear up, so please bear with us. And we are working really closely very various entities to see if we can allow our research grant program to start back up. So, in other words, students are still conducting research now, and if they need funding and they can conduct it in a safe manner, we are hoping to still give that option. We really want graduate students to be productive students and be productive researchers, so we're working on that. One of the biggest concerns we are hearing right now is students needing financial help due to a loss of their primary income or perhaps their spouse losing a job. We are working with Nancy Young and others through the Stay Black and Gold initiative, which was just mentioned. We also want to emphasize that students should continue to email GSA if they have any questions or concerns, so that we can get sort of a active table going of the issues. Lastly, I wanted to point out that, again, even though our campus property is closed, we are still holding monthly senate meetings virtually. We have what I
believe will be the first ever virtual election hosted by GSA at the end of the month. We still have the version of our award ceremony. And we plan on having a virtual town hall for grad students in the near future. With that being said, I am now pleased to introduce Dr. Gunes Koru who's president of the faculty senate.

- Thank you, Alex. It's always great to hear from our student leaders. And as the faculty senate president, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of our faculty members for all the work that they have done to adapt to the changing conditions. So our faculty members have been very successful in creating new and flexible learning opportunities for their students by also taking advantage of modern IT tools made available by the Division of Information Technology. So we greatly appreciate their contribution as well. So our faculty members revised their syllabi, course policies and requirements, and their course materials. And their efforts in such a short amount of time are really commendable and show their dedication to supporting student success and learning in our university. I would also like to thank the UMBC administration for coming up with very timely policy changes, such as the changes in grading policy, changes in the promotion and tenure policies. During these times when a rapid response is required, our administration also incorporated the feedback from the Shared Governance bodies including, of course, the faculty senate. So we were consulted as the faculty senate officers and executive community members, and we were happy to provide feedback. So as a next step, I wanted to also share with you some of the usable ideas I have heard recently from other faculty members related to our educational activities. So as the faculty members, we should participate in the process of revising and finalizing departmental policies. And while doing so, we should remember that these times require rapid response and flexibility. So we need to keep this in mind. The deans and department chairs, faculty members should plan for probably higher advising needs, which can occur through the end of this semester and after the end of the semester as well. In the courses we teach, it's important to remember that every course and every student have differences, so therefore, it's important to continuously seek feedback from our students about how they are able to cope with the changes. So we need to remember that some of our students or their family members may experience various hardships, including sometimes not having connectivity, not having the digital tools. I know that the university and Division of Information Technology is going to continue to provide maximum support as well. But we should, as educators, also plan to use different modes of education. So we need to use asynchronous methods and tools of education in order to the synchronous ones. We need to think proactively about what could go wrong when the students complete their assignments and tests. And remember that these are the times that require maximum flexibility and understanding. And once more, thank you very much. I'd like to thank everyone for everything that they do. And now I would like to introduce the vice president of finance and administration Lynne
Hello, everyone. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk with you today about what we have been doing to try to get beyond the adjustment period here. So representing all of my colleagues who have been working daily to solve some of the really challenging issues that we've found, we are guided by a couple of principles. These are principles that are guiding us in challenging times in the past. The first one is supporting the quality of our academic program, including everything we can do to support student success. And the second one is supporting all of the people who make up our community. So part of that last one is trying to be as fair as possible in all of the actions we take. So as you might imagine, there are so many details that we didn't anticipate as we were going into preparing for this transition. And so perhaps you're thinking, why is it taking so long to do a lot of the things that we've said we're gonna do, but have not happened yet, including refunds and other kinds of things that we may talk about in a few minutes. What I can tell you is that everybody working on those issues is working as hard as they can to be as fair as possible and to adapt all of our processes and policies to get this done as quickly as possible. People have been wonderful at helping each other. People have been wonderful at staying positive and just can-do attitude, jumping in and figuring out what we need to do. And that includes our student leaders and students generally, faculty, staff, administrators. They've been incredible through this period. We'll probably talk about some of the more specifics in a bit, but right now I am very happy to turn this over to our staff Shared Governance leaders Diana Smith from NESS, Bobby Lubaszewski from the Professional Staff Senate, and Laila Shishineh, who is the current chair of the University System Staff Council. Thank you.

- Good afternoon, everybody. It's so good to see you today. We're really appreciative of the support that we've received as staff members from the administration and from the university. It's been an adjustment for us to be working at home, adjusting schedules. I particularly feel for you who have small children at home and are having to deal with them and their schooling as well. We know that that's a challenge, but the flexibility that the university has offered us in doing things at different times of day, we're not necessarily an eight to five kind of thing anymore. It's really nice to have that flexibility to be able to take care of our family, and I'm hearing that from people that they do appreciate that. I'm happy that some of you have responded to our emails asking about what it is that's happening in your areas that are causing you some concern. And on a meeting this morning, some of those things are gonna be addressed and I'm gonna get back to you. There's going to be some information coming out about some technical issues about using the VPN and signing on at home, and some of the backlog that we've had in those areas. We'll be glad to be getting that out to you, as well as some information about what's going to be happening for continuity in the
future. Working at home, how long is this gonna last? We don't know. But those work arrangements will be coming out soon, we hope. Bobby, is there anything that you'd like to pass on from the Professional Staff Senate?

- Yes, thank you, Diana. First of all, I'd just like to thank all of our staff who have been amazingly resilient throughout this entire process. From the get-go, the question we have been hearing isn't "What does this mean for me?", it's been "How do we continue to give our students "the same level of support, but now virtually?" And I think we've started to see the answers from departments across campus. From, as Nancy mentioned earlier, the career center who's now working through ways to connect students and employers virtually and figuring out ways how to offer career month workshops and panel discussions fully online. The women's center has offered virtual free-hour lounge for what they call some much needed togetherness. And the counseling center, as Nancy also mentioned, is providing its services remotely. And the list kind of goes on and on. In the Professional Staff Senate, we're really no different. We're moving forward with all of our initiatives, and really at how we can modify our existing action plan virtually. We're moving forward with things like our nomination and election process, which we'll be sending more info out to Exempt staff on Monday. We're really looking for ways in which we can help virtually maintain our sense of community. And we're really seeing that happen in an individual division basis through things like virtual hangouts, virtual book clubs, and even virtual happy hours. But through PSS, we're trying to look for ways in which we can kind of celebrate and socialize as a greater campus community. So that's really something we're working on. Next Thursday will be our first fully virtual PSS meeting. Everyone is welcome to join, it's open to the public, so we invite you to come to that. The Webex info is found on our myUMBC group for the Professional Staff Senate. And if you're not able to join us, you can find a list of current senators on pss.umbc.edu. Any of our senators will be happy to listen to anything you wanna bring up. We'd love to hear about your challenges throughout this move to remote work. But we'd also love to hear about your successes, because we know there have been plenty of successes. And maybe your success can help inspire others. Because at the end of the day, we're really going to get through this together and hopefully come out of this as a stronger community in the end. So again, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of your PSS senators. We're really here to help. And with that being said, I'd like to now send it over to the CUS Chair, Dr. Laila Shishineh.

- Great, thank you, Bobby. Hello, everybody. I'm so excited to be here virtually with all of you today. As Lynne mentioned and Bobby mentioned, I currently serve as the chair of our Council of University System Staff. So I represent UMBC at the system level with the University System office and the chancellor's office. And I am happy to share that we have continued our business with CUSS without even
missing a beat with all of this going on. We hosted our first ever virtual Council of University System Staff meeting last week completely online with tons of help from IT at UMBC, so thank you guys for that. We had 35 Council members from our 12 different institutions in the system tune in to our meeting. And we were able to have a full Council meeting and even break into committees. So we have five standing committees on the Council, and those committees were able to meet. But really our focus in that meeting last week was to think about how we can start to hear the experience of staff at each of the institutions. So for me and the representatives from UMBC, that would be hearing from staff on our campus about the successes and challenges that we're all experiencing in this transition. So we started to share some ideas, and you'll see more of this coming out between the Professional Staff Senate, the Nonexempt Staff Senate, and the Council in terms of hearing feedback about best practices when it comes to work from home, how are we balancing work, and life, and taking care of kids and family members, and making time for ourselves still and figuring out what that looks like. And then also making sure that we have great communication that's going out to staff. I think our campus has been exceptional in terms of sending out updates as soon as we can to all of our constituency groups. But really making sure we are keeping staff informed about things that impact our roles and/or getting feedback about things that may or may not be working. And we are even starting to think forward to the point when we will, and we will, return to normal, about how we assess what did and did not work in terms of working from home. I think we have a real opportunity here to collect some information about this flexibility, and teleworking, and what went really well, and what maybe we could keep when we return to campus to provide staff with some even more options in terms of how we get our work done. Because I think we have done an amazing job for those who are able to do their work from home in just picking that up and running with it as a campus. I would like to mention, and similar to what Diana and Bobby said, myself and our five other representatives that serve on the Council on behalf of UMBC are here for staff. Our contact information is on the Professional State Senate website. You are welcome to reach out to us at any point in time, share suggestions, share challenges, please, even share things that are going well or things that have really worked for you as we start to think about how we showcase that for folks and help people adjust. I think we're all kind of getting the swing of it now in week two going into week three, but I'd love to hear from folks about what that has looked like in each of your areas. And so just know that we're here for you, the Shared Governance groups, myself, Diana, Bobby, and all of our senators and representatives are happy to work with all staff members across campus. So with that, I'm gonna turn it over to Lisa Akchin associate vice president for engagement, who's actually going to introduce now the question and comment portion of this event, so Lisa.

- Thank you to all of our leaders who have opened up our time together
today. And thank you to the more than well over 100 people who have submitted comments, ideas, and questions. Leaders, what I think our community would most want you to know at this moment in addition to some of the questions we'll get to in a moment is we have had many people write recognizing the collective effort of so many at UMBC. Whether faculty, staff, students, administrators, leaders, people who are coming in virtually to do their jobs, people who are coming to the campus in limited numbers to do work that has to happen here, and what we're seeing in the comments is a lot of appreciation for the hard work and support going on during this challenging time. So I thank everybody who shared questions and comments. As you heard today, there are many policies and practices and efforts in place to support faculty, staff, and students in our community right now. And we also know that it is challenging to communicate with a community of 20,000 plus people. And we need also for everyone who knows of somebody who needs additional support to be in touch with the leaders that are here with us today, because the goal is, this is UMBC together, nobody should be slipping through the cracks for a lack of information or support. So we will be able to address some of the most frequently asked questions today. Everyone who sent in a question with an email address will get a personal follow-up. And we will proceed from there. And so the first question I'd like to ask Vice President Young to respond to, we have received a number of questions about how the UMBC community is supporting undergraduate and graduate students beyond academics, including particularly students who have financial need, housing and food insecurity, and health and safety concerns. Nancy.  

- I have to unmute. It's a great question and it's a big question. And it's a question that the answer will evolve to over time. And I wanna explain what I mean by that. We started out with initially some of the things that we knew students needed support on when they were on campus taking classes. So making sure that basic services were up and running and that students could access them remotely, so that the supports they were used to relying on are still there. So that was just number one. How do we immediately, just like faculty and our academic administrators and our amazing staff and the tech crew were working to get academics, we were thinking about the services that students rely on from us regularly and moving forward. And I'm gonna hit the financial piece last, because I think that's really big. So if you're waiting for that answer, hang in there, it's coming. The second thing I want people to know, when we think about some basic needs like housing and food, and we knew that to manage safety, when we hear news like about cruise ships or other large housing units, we wanted to make sure our students weren't in that location where there was opportunity for a lot of illness to spread quickly. And so listening to the governor and to amazing medical staff that have been working with us, we, like other schools, shut our residence halls. At the same time, we knew that that meant some of our students may not have a place to go. We knew that that meant that some students may have families that weren't supportive of them coming home, or spaces that
didn't allow for them to come home, or some students that didn't have that at all. So we do still have a small community of students living with us, and who will remain with us for the duration. That included students in some cases that didn't want to go home because there was an immunocompromised person in their home and they still needed to work. And so while it's a small community, our staff reached out to listen to those stories and to make sure students had that. Our Retriever Essentials continues to operate, albeit in another location. Making sure that we aren't putting our own students and staff who volunteer in that center at risk, those bags of food that people have come used to relying on and others may need now can still be picked up at our police station. So there are spaces where in the virtual world you can go and let people know you need that. And so we've been really working to get our websites up. But most of all we've been responding to your emails, we've been taking your feedback, and we've been thinking about what people need. Seniors, we have heard you, and there are people on the phone that can answer your questions about commencement. And we've also heard the sadness of going away when you've left campus thinking you were coming back after spring break and maybe not getting to say goodbye for awhile to people you've spent four or five years with. So we're listening to that, too, and we're trying to get our student orgs up and running in the virtual space, so that you have the opportunity to think about how you wanna keep connecting together and how you can give us feedback. And this is getting long, but there's two more really important things I wanna say before there's other questions. So the other one is, that we are gonna be putting out an assessment next week to all of our undergraduate students, and then in the following week to our grads. Graduate students had some specific needs we're trying to work through. But we have a really short five or 10-minute assessment. Because we wanna know where you're having the most trouble right now. And it's gonna let you say thumbs up, I'm good. I've got this, I'm a seven, eight, or nine, maybe even a 10 on this scale, I'm good. And I did talk to a couple students this morning that told me that, warmed my heart. But secondly, if you're struggling or aren't sure what's going on, we've given you some areas we've heard from other students where you can ask for help, and we're releasing this survey on different days, so some of you might get it a little earlier than others, so that we literally can respond to you if you've got a question until we hit everyone of you that still needs help. And I know that's ambitious, but we've got student leaders, we've got staff that are working from home and are ready to do that. So the financial piece. We're gonna have other people who are more expert than me, and you're gonna hear a moment about our Black and Gold Fund in one of the other questions from our institutional, but we are already raising money to think about how for students that have immediate needs that aren't academic. Whether that might be help with food. It might be help with paying a rent. It might be something that doesn't seem like something a university would necessarily just be able to help you with, but our goal is to begin thinking about some of those things while we're looking at how
financial aid needs to get adjusted. And I have talked really fast and really long, so I wanna turn it back over to you. But as you can see, support is an incredibly large piece of this puzzle.

- Thank you, Nancy. And in keeping with this question of financial need, we have received many, many questions about refunds. And initially, will there be refunds? And we've now announced that there will be some refunds made. So I'm gonna ask Lynne Schaefer, our vice president for finance and administration, to speak to what is being refunded, and at a high level, what is the process for that? What can students expect to see, when, and how it will come to them? Lynne.

- Thank you, Lisa. We have been working diligently to figure out exactly those questions with the goal of being as fair as possible to all of our students. Recognizing that you are not able to take advantage of some of the things that you have paid good money for. So we will be doing prorated refunds of room and board for those students who have been on campus. We will be doing a prorated refund for all students, at least all students who paid the fees for parking and transportation, athletics fee, the commons fee, the auxiliary facilities fee. And we're right now in the process of calculating what those refunds will be. Who knew that it would be as complicated as it is. So we're having to actually make those calculations almost on a student-by-student basis. But we're well along in that process. Our goal is to at least issue the refunds through BankMobile, those students who have signed up for it before the end of April. And I'll use this opportunity to encourage those students who did not signup for BankMobile to go to the student business services website and get the instructions for doing that. That's the best way to get your refund as quickly as possible. Thank you.

- Yay, and keeping, I guess, again with the theme of resources, Greg Simmons, the vice president for Institutional Advancement is with us and he can share the exciting news about the ways in which the community can provide more support for particularly our students. And I'm also gonna ask Greg to talk about what we are having conversations with the class of 2020 about.

- Sure, thanks, Lisa. Hello, Retriever nation. Thanks for everything that you're doing right now to all make sure that we work through these challenging times together. It's inspiring to be part of the UMBC community. You know, Nancy hit the Stay Black and Gold Fund really, really well. It's been an important effort that the Student Government Association has run for years. In the last week, what we've realized we've had to do is really scale it up. So we worked with the Student Government Association to kinda revamp the process. And we've already seen people respond to understand the need that our students are gonna be facing on a day-to-day basis. In the last five days we've seen over $50,000 come into that fund. For people who are interested to learn more, if you go to giving.umbc.edu/emergencyfund, you can
learn about the fund, how to give to it, and also how to apply. So look for additional communication in the days ahead to see more about the impact of that fund. And thanks to everybody who has helped understand and recognize the real challenging time that many of our students are having right now. We have also heard loud and clear and we know full well. I've participated in UMBC Commencement as both a student, a graduate, and as an administrator. It's an extraordinarily important rite of passage. It's an important way that students and their families celebrate an extraordinary amount of work, and commitment, and time, and effort. It was devastating for us when we had to realize that that May Commencement wasn't gonna happen in the way that we've come to expect. Please know that we are committed to helping you celebrate the completion of your undergraduate, your master's degree, your PhD to the best possible way that we can. We're working on a number of things right now from a way to continue to make sure we mark that day in May with all of our students and their family through some sort of virtual programming, and also considering a whole range of options for how we can have some sort of face-to-face experience. We have done a survey that's gone out. We've had over 600 undergraduate and graduate students respond and give us their thoughts and their ideas. We're working the Shared Governance organization that you've already heard from today. We're taking advice and looking what's happening across the country. And there will be more information coming to you in the days ahead. But know that we wanna make sure you formally have the opportunity to go from being a student to one of the 85,000 UMBC alums who are working across this country and doing a fantastic job in their fields. And so look for more information in the days ahead, and again, thanks for everything you're doing.

- Thank you. Now, I'd like to go back to Lynne, if I could. One question we've received indicates that some staff who have duties that require them to be on campus are concerned about coming, the safety of the environment. Could you please speak to our approach for limiting the number of employees required to be on campus and for maintaining a safe work environment for them?

- Thank you, Lisa. First of all, I wanna say that we are all highly motivated to severely limit the number of employees, faculty, staff, and students who come to campus on a regular basis. Our top priority is protecting those people who have to come to campus. And so we have, as we've adjusted our processes and figured out different ways to do business, we have been able to severely reduce the number of people who are coming to campus. We also have been able to adjust so that people are coming not every day. Less than half of the people who are coming to campus are coming every day. Most are coming once a month, once every couple of weeks. You can imagine just because of the way our business processes work with the state of Maryland, we have to come to campus to get payroll out, we have to come to campus to make payments. The police, of course, are here every day. In order to keep
people as safe as possible, couple of factors. First of all, there are very few people on campus. So there are very few people around to spread any kinds of germs. Second, we still have half a crew of ABM, our housekeepers, on staff, and they are going in to clean areas before people come in and then clean them again after they leave. So as we go on, we will continue to find ways to limit the amount of people who have to come to campus to take care of those necessary business processes.

– Thank you, Lynne. And we have also had a number of questions from people who are not currently coming to campus about parking deductions. Can you address that?

– I can. I'm so glad you didn't ask this question last week. So we've been able, with resolving a lot of the issues about business processes and student refunds, we turned our attention to faculty and staff parking. And I'm so happy to say that we have worked it out so that payroll deduction for employee parking will be discontinued effective with the next pay, that's the April 17th pay. So I thank everybody for your patience with that. And I'm happy to say that we have put that in motion.

– Thank you, Lynne. I'd like to ask Provost Rous to speak to the horizon of summer session and fall semester. We've had a number of questions about will summer courses be online, what about in the fall. And I think those questions recognize that there's a time needed for planning for optimal delivery of courses. So Dr. Rous, what could you share about that, please?

– Yeah, thanks very much, Lisa. Let me first address summer session very straightforwardly. We will be offering our summer sessions. Currently, we're actively considering whether to move those courses online, and we expect to have an announcement about that early next week. So that's the summer session. As far as what happens in the future, I think sometimes people talk, for example, about contingency planning, et cetera, so let me talk to that issue. First, I'm gonna state the obvious. None of us know what actually will be happening in the fall due to the coronavirus. But nevertheless, this is a very important question. How are we planning for the fall? What's happening, going on? And I think what I'd say about that is sometimes when we think about contingency plans, we think about a great, big stack of paper which has a full written plan 400 pages long. And we do have a plan, it's the pandemic plan that we've had for a long time. But here I think is actually how the contingency planning is working on our campus. And that says we move through this transition and we move forward over the current weeks. We are constantly asking ourselves the question, what do we need to be doing if we're not able, for example, to offer face-to-face classes in the fall? What are the things that we're doing that are working and will translate to that? What are the things that maybe we've delayed a little bit, but we're
gonna have to get to in the fall? And most importantly, what are the things that we really need to make changes to as we move to the future? And that reflects back on what many, many people have spoken to already, which is the importance of assessment, or as our president would say, constantly looking in the mirror to make sure that we're doing everything possible and to understand how we'd plan for the future, things that are not quite working, and things that are. So I hope that, well, let me mention one more thing. I think it's also important to recognize that when we go back to face-to-face, we can do instruction face-to-face again, our university begins to function in ways that we would consider normal on our campus. We do need to recognize that the impacts of coronavirus, of this crisis on our students and our faculty and our staff continue beyond a single semester or above. And I think that needs to be and will be very important in our considerations. And it's also critically important in considerations and decisions we're making right now that they put, for example, students in the best position not only at the end of this semester, but for continuing their academic career in the semesters to come. So thank you for that question.

- Thank you, Provost Rous. So as we come to the end of this question and answer period in our first virtual town hall, I think we're all very mindful of the way the Division of Information Technology has provided a foundation for our community to continue to be a community in so many ways. Jack Suess is here in the meeting, and I wanted to ask Jack to share his thoughts right now. We've had a number of questions that relate to where maybe some of the bumps in the process have been. We addressed earlier the VPN access. What are you seeing that's working well? What are you seeing that needs to be addressed and how is IT moving forward to help with all of that? Jack.

- Thank you, Lisa. First, just a really big thank you to the Retriever community. The technology changes that COVID has thrust on the campus have really been immense. Two data points that just struck me. The first week of March, we had 180 Blackboard Collaborate sessions take place on campus. The week of March 23rd, the first week after spring break, we had over 35,000. When you look at the first week of March, we had 320 attendees in Webex meetings. Go to the week of March 23rd, we had over 20,000. These kind of changes where we have asked people to just completely change the way they do things has been immense, and we're really thankful to the community for just how well they have reacted and how positive they've been in working with us. To a person, as I've talked with my DoIT colleagues, all of them have said that as they have been working with people who have problems, they have noticed the good will they everyone has had and with the spirit of cooperation we have. So as we come to the end of these first two weeks, really what my team is trying to do is to assess the feedback that we've gotten and the feedback that you're gonna be giving. And from that, we're gonna be using it to improve our documentation, improve our procedures, and really work with groups to try to be
moving us not just from reacting, but to stabilization and to being able to take advantage of the technology to continue to be the community that we are. So thank you.

- Yeah, and then a final question that we have been receiving frequently is an understanding of what is happening in the national economy and the state economy, and questions people are having about job security. President Hrabowski will take that question, and then help us close the session. Dr. Hrabowski.

- Thank you, Lisa. Thank you very much and thanks to everybody who's been speaking to this point. Several things that I think are very important. Number one, we know that we're hearing about the challenges of job loss. I wanna take a minute and say we are all working to see what we can do to support the families of UMBC. Whether they are people with jobs who are not working right now, and we know there are off the campus, our students, and their parents, and their spouses, and partners. And most important, our goal will be to be as responsive and supportive as possible. We're working with the state and federal levels to look at ways that the country and our state will support higher education as we work to give more attention to what the needs will be of our students and of our colleagues. One of the questions that's been raised by some people is, are we talking about layoff? We are not talking about layoffs or furloughs at any point at this time. What we're talking about is people count. And anybody who's been around UMBC long enough knows that in these difficult times we keep saying just that, that people count. We will do whatever is necessary. As we get information from the state, we will share it with you as quickly as we get it. And we'll talk through things through Shared Governance. We'll give you a chance to give your points of view. The Community Resilience Group is something you'll be hearing about, simply because of Human Resources, and Student Affairs, Institutional Advancement, different units on campus are working to put something together to give people support. This is the new normal, and I know it's challenging for a lot of people. But let me bring up one thing we said at the beginning, safety and health. There are families that have had people to test positive. We've had one faculty member to die at this point. People are frightened. My message to you is we're going to get through all of this, with our alumni who are working on the problems, I mean, we get hope all the time. One of the young women Kizzmekia Corbett has actually completed the development of the vaccine at NIH that's now being tested Moderna, and one of the alumni at Moderna, one of the UMBC alumni is one of the senior scientists there. So we're seeing a lot of progress with the science itself. Finally, I want you to think about this. People on our campus through this technology are working constantly, the leaders of the campus and others, as you work on teaching and learning and in your classes online, most important to do what we can to support the students. Students, you're going to be okay. I wanna say that over and over again. This is a time when you're being challenged, this is your
generation that's seeing this as we all are. It's showing how connected we are as human beings. I would challenge you on several levels. Look at the big picture. Look at how we're working to keep people safe through the social distancing, and the new laws and guidelines about masks, for example, and handwashing. But also I want you to think about how these things are connected to your education. People should be planning to vote. We should not forget the most important things. If we want our country to do well, we have to put in place elected officials who we believe truly believe in people and the value of humankind, and that's most important. And number two, I'm gonna say something else. Please take the Census. Get that Census completed, because the more people we have counted, the more funds we can get to help all of you out. Final point to all of you, hope. Never lose hope. This is a time when we are asked to come and be our best selves. We do that best by coming together. UMBC together, connecting to each other. Let us know when you have a problem, when you see a friend having a problem, let us know. We are gonna work to do everything we can to make sure you are successful. Remember this, students, the world needs you now more than ever. You're gonna be stronger as a result of this. And one day when you're talking to your grandkids, you will say, "We made it through." We can get this. We can do this. It will get better. Thank you and thanks everybody for joining us today. Stay safe.