



## Office of the President

May 6, 2020

The last 24 hours have brought news that reminds us of the importance of faith, friendship, community, and sisterhood. Yesterday, we were deeply saddened to learn of the permanent closure of the Institute of Notre Dame. Today in Governor Hogan's press conference, we heard State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Karen B. Salmon announce that all schools will remain closed through the rest of the 2019-20 academic year. In light of this announcement, *Mercy Online 2.0* will remain in effect for the rest of the academic year according to the schedule outlined in Principal Jeanne Blakeslee's letter sent earlier today.

In her remarks, Dr. Salmon also referenced "Maryland Together," an evolving document that will provide guidance on the reopening of schools. That document will help inform our newly established COVID-19 Response Team (CRT), an institution-wide committee that will pick up and expand the work of our earlier COVID-19 Task Force. The CRT includes Mercy trustees and leadership team members, as well as Mercy alumnae and others with expertise in public health, healthcare, education, facilities, technology and other relevant areas. Trustee Marylee Pearl Robinson '96 and Dean of Students Mary Ella Franz Marion '76 will co-chair the CRT with Mary Beth Lennon.

Dr. Salmon's announcement today does not preclude concluding activities or celebrations if state and local authorities modify or lift social distancing restrictions. We remain committed to coming together as a Mercy community, when allowed by state and local authorities. Our CRT will be an important resource for us as we identify and implement health and safety protocols that are especially relevant in a school setting.

This uncertainty challenges all of us--students, families, faculty, and staff, but with strong leadership, expert advice, and our unifying Mercy spirit, we will continue to respond in ways that reflect excellence, compassion, and innovation. Thank you for your partnership and your prayers.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Beth Lennon '85  
President

Kevin G. Burke P'10  
Chair, Board of Trustees