

(Sent only to those receiving credit/refund)

From: Joan Gabel <jgabel@[REDACTED]>
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Got slightly more personal -

What do you think?

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Dear Students:

Over the past 24 hours, the University has heard from some of you, either directly or via social media, regarding Housing & Residential Life's decision to refund \$1,200 to each student in University housing who had paid room and board fees for the spring semester. I want to take a moment to provide context for the decision and share some insight into the decision-making process.

Let me first acknowledge that these are extremely challenging and uncertain times for all of us, especially all of you. Your education has been disrupted, your families may be facing health or financial challenges, and you may not know what the future holds. You may know that my own children are college students so I see this disruption from every point of view. My heart breaks for everyone who is suffering right now.

Your University is facing challenges as well. The financial impact of COVID-19 and the resulting decisions have cost the University tens of millions of dollars up to this point, and we expect severe losses in the future. We are using every tool at our disposal to reduce costs without impacting the student experience or having to make the difficult decisions regarding the status of our faculty and staff.

Please know that the room and board fees that you pay each semester go well beyond simply a "room rental" and dining services. These fees, among other things, help defray the salaries of thousands of dedicated and hard-working custodians, maintenance staff, cooks and servers who support you and our infrastructure. We are doing all we can to support these front-line workers during these difficult times and funds from the room and board fees are an instrumental way that we can continue to support the most vulnerable in our community.

Senior system leadership was intimately involved in the decision to refund monies to students and agreed on the amount. But we came to the conclusions only after consultation with internal and external experts, as well as with our peer institutions. To provide you some comparisons, the \$1,200 being refunded to you is significantly more than other Big Ten schools are offering to their students in refunds, and in-line with others. In one case, the \$1,200 is 40% more than another institution is willing to refund. We believe that the \$1,200 is fair and equitable, when taking into account the dynamics addressed above.

Thank you for your understanding and kindness during this challenging time, and continued success with your remote learning.

With warmest regards,

Joan Gabel

Sent from my iPhone