**Title**: COVID-19 WCU Suspension of Direct Community Engagement

WCU Student Leaders,

The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs (OSLVP) first wants to thank you for all of the volunteerism, philanthropy, and community engagement we’ve seen from your clubs and organizations throughout this academic year. We are grateful to work with students dedicated to empowering their communities while practicing active citizenship.

Given the totality of available guidance on COVID-19 at the federal, state, and local levels – WCU has suspended experiential learning experiences such as clinicals, internships, practica, and student teaching. OSLVP interprets this directive to include *direct* and *university-sponsored* community engagement activities (e.g., face-to-face tutoring, mentoring, volunteering, etc.). **Therefore, until further notice, OSLVP is strongly discouraging direct community service and engagement.**

In wake of the spread of COVID-19, many of our routines have shifted and as such, some of us may have more time on our hands. Many of us may feel the urge to spend this time volunteering to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are supported. However, at this time, one of the best ways to serve the community, state, and nation is to engage in the healthy behaviors prescribed by leading experts, especially through social distancing. In a [recent article](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/15/smarter-living/wirecutter/5-ways-to-help-during-coronavirus-while-social-distancing.html), the New York Times highlights at least 5 ways to help your community combat COVID-19 while social distancing. Such practices include:

* Donating to your local food bank;
* Offering assistance to at-risk neighbors;
* Planning to stay in touch from afar;
* Staying up on your local news; and
* Stocking up, then stopping.

In consultation with our community partners, OSLVP is in the process of identifying more impactful and meaningful ways through which our students, faculty, and staff can serve our communities while social distancing over the next several months. We’d also like to hear from you! **Are you or your organization interested in participating in such** **indirect service & engagement opportunities**? **Do you have any ideas or thoughts for how WCU students could provide indirect service?** To discuss this and more, we invite you to join us for a Zoom session with our staff and other student leaders. These Zoom sessions will take place on:

* Monday, March 30th at 3pm
* Thursday, April 2nd at 1pm

If you are interested in participating in one of these sessions, please let me know at your earliest convenience and I will provide you with the Zoom link/number.

Be sure to submit any service hours from prior to spring break using the Community Service Report on RamConnect: [www.tinyurl.com/servicereport1920](http://www.tinyurl.com/servicereport1920).

Please don’t hesitate to contact me directly at [sgillespie@wcupa.edu](mailto:sgillespie@wcupa.edu) with any ideas, thoughts, or concerns.

In Service,

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