

# CU professors, students uncertain of semester's future

## University trustees set to hold special meeting today

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR  
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CLEMSON — Clemson University's Board of Trustees will hold a special teleconference meeting today as colleges across the nation shutter in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The only meeting agenda item listed for this morning is a "university status and preparations" report from president Jim Clements.

**'UNCERTAIN FEELING'**  
Multiple Clemson professors and students

spoke to The Journal this week, each casting doubt classes would



Frith

Dr. Jordan Frith, the Pearce Professor of Professional Communication at Clemson, said he has no inside knowledge about the administration's deliberations, but believes classes won't

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take place in person this semester.

"Faculty doesn't know anything that the students don't know. We get updates the same time students do," he said. "It's totally been an uncertain feeling, especially because I'm friends with a ton of professors and their universities are closing. I follow the news really closely, and I know this is going to get really bad. Just kind of sitting around waiting for Clemson to close, that uncertainty, it was definitely a thing."

Clemson is on spring break through Friday. The university will hold online instruction from March 23 through April 5 before reevaluation, according to spokesman Joe Galbraith.

"I think the bigger question is if we have fall classes," Frith said. "I can read. It's going to be bad. I think it will be bad. I don't know of any professors who think we should be in class right now — none."

Parks, recreation and tourism management senior lecturer Dan Anderson said Clemson benefited in planning from past e-learning days.

"I was a bit surprised that it took them so long to make that final call of having two weeks off (for e-learning) after spring break," he said. "Clemson is really on the cutting

edge with this — we're one of the few prepared with this. We had two trial run practice days in the fall with the Georgia Tech game, and instead of canceling classes, we practiced online and had one this semester. I think from an administrative standpoint, I've been very impressed. The machine ran very well."

At the University of South Carolina, e-learning classes will begin Monday after the school added an additional week of spring break.

"This is their second week of spring break, meaning no classes. I mean, they had no plan," Anderson said. "That wasn't an option for us. Students pay to get an education, and we will



Russell

continue to provide that."

Director of landscape architecture graduate programs Paul Russell agreed the e-learning

days helped prepare Clemson.

"We've just got to look at it and respond to it," Russell said. "Our students are resilient and capable of responding to this, and we have to do it, too. We're going to move on and make the best of it."

Anderson, who also said he didn't have any knowledge of the administration's thinking, expects

Clemson to call off in-person instruction.

"I don't see a scenario where we come back, and that's not based on any knowledge I have," he said. "That's just kind of reading the tea leaves. Unless in two weeks we've gotten this thing taken care of — we as in the country and virus — that doesn't seem to be a realistic thought. Let's say that happens, I don't see the merit in bringing students back for two weeks of class other than trying to salvage that senior year experience and commencement. I am planning my class as if we're not coming back."

### GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Vanessa Martinez, a senior biology student, told The Journal it would be "crushing" not to have graduation, but she believed "it's better to keep the same members of the Clemson fam (sic) safe and healthy as the first priority."