



Council of Graduate Students
The Ohio State University



Dear Governor DeWine, Chancellor Gardner, Speaker Householder, Senate President Obhof, House Minority Leader Sykes, Senate Minority Leader Yuko, Representative Keller, and Senator Kunze, Representative Callender, Senator Dolan, Representative Boggs, and Senator Craig:

The Inter-Professional Council (IPC), Council of Graduate Students (CGS), and Undergraduate Student Government (USG) respectively represent the professional, graduate, and undergraduate student bodies of The Ohio State University. As you are aware, the emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) here in Ohio has necessitated decisive action. As we write this letter, The Ohio State University is joined by Case Western Reserve, Kent State, Miami, Oberlin, Ohio University, University of Cincinnati, and Youngstown State in moving all on-campus courses to remote instruction for the remainder of the semester and taking actions to protect students by discouraging them from returning to campus or requiring them to leave campus dorms. We applaud these swift and decisive actions, which will no doubt save lives.

As students adjust to this unusual challenge, many students have expressed concerns regarding their residency applications. Ohio residency requirements are embodied in Ohio Revised Code 3333.31 and Ohio Administrative Code 3333-1-10. Ohio law requires a non-resident student for tuition purposes to maintain residency in Ohio for twelve consecutive months to be reclassified for tuition. This reclassification can save a student tens of thousands of dollars a year.

While not codified in the Ohio Revised or Administrative Codes, universities across the state caution students against leaving the state for longer than a three-to-four-week period. Students are instructed that anything longer will “seriously jeopardize[their] claim to Ohio residency.”¹ With the current restrictions imposed across the United States to address COVID-19, many students have worried that they will not be able to return to Ohio within an acceptable time period or will be isolated in Ohio at a time when they would like to return to their families.

¹ <https://www.csuohio.edu/registrar/frequently-asked-questions-ohio-residence>.

We are requesting that the Chancellor of Higher Education, the Ohio Legislature, and Governor DeWine provide relief to students who are now faced with tough decisions regarding their residency applications. **Specifically, we would ask that an exception be provided that excuses students absent from the state for the period of time in which their institution of higher education has canceled in-person courses and issued statements discouraging students from returning to campus.** This exception would apply retroactively to all students affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Current Ohio law provides for similar exceptions for veterans, migrant workers, and certain employees. Not only does this provide direct relief to thousands of students across Ohio, but it also further helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that students have the necessary resources to handle this pandemic. We look forward to working together with you on providing our students with critical relief in this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Jordan Vajda
President of the Inter-Professional Council

Stephen Post
President of the Council of Graduate Students

Kathleen Greer
President of the Undergraduate Student Government