

# US university tracking virus' spread warns of layoffs, cuts

April 23 2020, by Regina Garcia Cano

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In this Feb. 26, 2019, file photo, Johns Hopkins University President Ronald Daniels speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in his office in Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University, whose researchers have been at the forefront of the global response to the coronavirus, is expecting to cut salaries and furlough and lay off employees because of multimillion dollar losses arising from the pandemic, its president announced Tuesday, April 22, 2020. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File)

Johns Hopkins University, whose researchers have been at the forefront of the global response to the new coronavirus, is expecting to cut salaries and furlough and lay off employees because of multimillion-dollar losses arising from the pandemic, its president has announced.

The private university has played a globally prominent role in tracking and modeling the spread of the virus. But the university said the reductions would have no impact on its data-gathering and research on the virus.

University President Ronald Daniels wrote in a letter posted online Tuesday that the private research university in Baltimore expects to lose more than \$100 million by the end of June and as much as \$375 million during the coming fiscal year. Before the outbreak, the university had projected a positive margin of \$72 million this fiscal year on overall budget of \$6.5 billion.

"Ever since we decided to end our on-campus instruction for undergraduates, graduate, and professional students; to suspend the lion's share of our lab-based research program; and to halt elective medical procedures, the university has suffered a dramatic and unprecedented contraction," Daniels wrote.

He added in his letter, "More than 1,200 employees have been rendered idle because they are unable to perform their duties. Many more are working off-site but at significantly reduced levels of productivity."

Asked by The Associated Press whether the measures would have any impact on the university's virus research and its count of reported worldwide deaths and COVID-19 infections, a university spokeswoman, Jill Rosen, responded by email: "There will be no effect on our pandemic efforts."

Johns Hopkins is not the only one facing financial challenges.

Colleges across the nation are scrambling to close deep budget holes after the coronavirus outbreak triggered financial losses that could total more than \$100 million at some institutions. Hard-hit colleges have begun furloughing employees to try to prevent future layoffs, while some small schools have closed permanently.

Daniels said furloughs and layoffs within parts of the university will be and "unavoidable consequence of the losses." The university has also imposed a hiring freeze on staff positions for the fiscal year starting July 1 as well as restrictions on hiring for academic positions.

Base salaries for faculty and staff for the same period will not increase, with no annual merit raises. Daniels said he and Provost Sunil Kumar will slash their salaries by 20% starting in July. Other deans and university officers will cut their pay by 10%.

Contributions to employees' retirement plans will stop for one year in [fiscal year](#) 2021. The institution has also suspended new capital projects costing more than \$100,000 through June of next year.

An online dashboard hosted by the university's Center for Systems Science and Engineering tracks reported cases in near real time, providing information to public health officials, media outlets and the public. It shows the location as well as the number of coronavirus cases, deaths and recoveries reported by governments around the world.

The number of infections is thought to be far higher because many people have not been tested, and studies suggest people can be infected with the virus without feeling sick.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate

symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up within weeks. For some, it can cause more severe illness and be life-threatening.

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