

An open letter to the Iowa City business community,

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, each of us has struggled to figure out what is the right thing to do and how to best to continue to support our local community. We have looked to our health care and public health experts for guidance, and then to our elected officials to implement that guidance.

Our local city council, our county board, and our governor have issued mandates and public health proclamations that they believe will help protect the citizens of our communities by decreasing the spread of COVID-19.

Each of us has a responsibility to ourselves and our neighbors to follow these mandates and the public health proclamations issued by our governor. The responsibility also falls to you, the businesses of our community, to comply.

Over the past two weeks, I have been exceedingly disappointed in some of the downtown Iowa City businesses and your choices to disregard the proclamation from the governor. These actions have led to an increase in the transmission of COVID-19 in our community, and we, as a community, will now have to respond.

I am imploring you to adhere to [the governor's proclamation](#), which requires you — and all Iowa bars and restaurants — to:

- Ensure at least 6 feet of physical distance between each group or individual dining or drinking alone.
- Ensure all patrons have a seat at a table or bar.
- Limit patrons from congregating together closer than 6 feet.

Your full cooperation and immediate compliance with these requirements will allow us, as a community, to recover from the recent spread of COVID-19.

Your decisions will directly impact the university's ability to honor the choices our students made to be in our community and on our campus. Our students want to be here. The university wants them here and the university knows how to keep them safe. Please help them stay here by doing your part.

Bruce Harreld
University of Iowa president