

We are sad to announce that The Shepherd's Center of Richmond (TSCOR) is canceling its spring Open University (OU) session. Open University is one of the most important parts of our mission to serve seniors, and we know you will be as disappointed as we are.

TSCOR has been carefully monitoring the situation with the potential spread of the COVID-19 illness. Public health officials and other experts are urging proactive measures rather than reactive ones and suggest social distancing as one of the most effective ways for the U.S. to reduce viral spread. As you know, many events around the country have been canceled for this reason, including similar lifelong learning programs in the Richmond area.

Since most of the attendees to OU are members of the most vulnerable category affected by COVID-19, it behooves us to be conservative in our approach to public gatherings. In addition, the churches in which we meet have closed their facilities for several weeks. Rather than postpone our schedule for half the session and then possibly have to deal with continuing the closure, we believe the best approach is to allow all of us to take the time to pass through this period with minimal exposure to risk.

Our current plan is to move most of the scheduled spring classes to the fall session, depending on the availability of instructors. A fall schedule will be sent, as usual, in August.

When it comes to spring tuition, we can offer you 3 options:

- 1) We can credit your prepaid tuition to the 2020 fall session or the 2020-21 tuition deal; or
- 2) We can refund your prepaid tuition; or
- 3) We will count your spring tuition payment as a tax deductible donation.

Obviously, option 3 would be the most beneficial to our organization. You would be helping defray the income loss of our spring session. If you choose this option, you will receive a tax donation letter from TSCOR.

If you haven't already done so, please let us know your preference by contacting Paula Grimes at pgrimes@tskor.org.

We at TSCOR appreciate your support of Open University and look forward to your continuing support next fall. This has been a difficult decision, but we believe it is the best approach to minimize the risk to attendees, instructors and staff.

Thank you for your understanding.

Hal Costley, TSCOR Board President
Julie Adams-Buchanan, TSCOR Executive Director