



September 11, 2020

Dear Business Leader,

You have probably heard by now that Northern Illinois University has announced some important developments in their efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the university. NIU has moved classes online and directed undergraduate students residing in DeKalb County to limit in-person activities for the next two weeks. In-person student activities are canceled and all gatherings are prohibited from September 11 to September 28.

A spike in positive COVID cases over the past week has placed DeKalb County in the Illinois Department of Public Health's "warning category." Despite a recent drop in cases in the last few days, NIU, in consultation with the DeKalb County Department of Public Health, is taking this step in an abundance of caution and in the long-term interests of the university and the community.

DeKalb County UNITES recognizes the importance of NIU and its students to the local business community. UNITES and its partners have encouraged students to shop locally and provided information about how to patronize local businesses during this time.

Here is some information to help small businesses in their planning over the next two weeks. Students **will be allowed** to:

- Go to work (after getting approval from their supervisors)
- Participate in off-campus internships or clinicals organized by colleges
- Take care of essential errands (trips to grocery store, medical appointments)
- Accept deliveries of food and groceries

Many NIU faculty and staff continue to work remotely to lessen the density on campus. The limitations announced today do not extend to faculty, staff or graduate students. For more information about NIU policies and procedures surrounding COVID, please see <https://www.niu.edu/protecting-the-pack/index.shtml>

During the course of the pandemic, DeKalb County businesses have demonstrated a high level of creativity and resilience. The critical nature of social media visibility and e-commerce capacity are apparent during times of restricted operations and mobility. A group of NIU and business leaders have collaborated to form 40TUDE, a service that employs NIU students, under the supervision of NIU faculty and local experts, to create and enhance social media and websites for local small businesses. To learn more, go to <https://www.dekalbcountyunites.com/40tude>

Best wishes and stay healthy!

Your Friends at DeKalb County UNITES