

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM MARK ABBOTT, WHOI PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution: All Cruises and Field Work Have Been Cancelled



"We are facing a truly unprecedented situation", WHOI president and director Mark Abbott says in a personal message on the institute's website. "I have watched with concern as the number of coronavirus (COVID-19) incidences has steadily increased around the world, in the United States and in Massachusetts, and I am hoping that you and your family and friends stay safe during this outbreak.

"The duration, scale and impact of the outbreak remain uncertain. Yet, in the face of this uncertainty, the WHOI community has pulled together to support one another, think creatively and devise new ways to press ahead with our important work of advancing scientific knowledge about our ocean and planet and communicating that knowledge to decision makers and the public," Abbott continues.

Working in Shifts

Until further notice, WHOI campus operations are in a limited and reduced state of on-site operations. WHOI is committed to implementing measures that increase social distancing to limit the spread of the virus. Abbott: "All of our departments, labs, academic programmes and administrative units have now implemented plans that allow for continuation of work and ongoing functioning of critical operations in accordance with social distancing guidelines, as well as federal and state directives."

This includes working remotely and on campus in shifts or in different locations as necessary for critical functions. "We have also restricted access to the WHOI dock and to our research vessels. All cruises and field work have been cancelled until the end of April, with the potential for further cancellations as we and our federal agency partners continue to assess the situation," says Abbott.

Understanding our Ocean

"We know that these efforts are not easy, and that they present challenges to us as individuals and as an institution. But together, we are working to preserve the well-being of WHOI personnel and students, while ensuring the long-term health of the institution and the critical work we do to advance the understanding of the ocean – one of our planet's most precious natural resources.

"I am proud to be part of this extraordinary organization and am committed to ensuring that every member of the community receives the support they need to remain healthy and productive in these difficult times. WHOI is built on our people, and protecting the safety and well-being of all is our top priority.

"On behalf of the entire WHOI community, I want to thank you for your continued support. We are working with our colleagues, the WHOI board, and our supporters and outside agencies to ensure that WHOI comes out of this global crisis as strong as ever. WHOI has weathered other crises in our 90-year history, and we will weather this one as well."

(Photo: Mark Abbott, courtesy Oregon State University)

