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Dr. Susan Mumm
Brescia University College

Without question, these are unprecedented and difficult times across the country and around the world. Leadership is in high-demand and decisions need to be made quickly and decisively to ensure we can effectively navigate this crisis.

I have been deeply impressed by the innovation and resilience expressed by Canadian universities in responding so quickly to the pressures and uncertainties presented as a result of COVID-19. You have been preparing for weeks, and that forward thinking has helped accelerate your institution's response to the situation. I do not envy the decisions you and your fellow university presidents have had to make over the last few days and weeks. However, thanks to your decisive action, Canadian universities are now at the vanguard of protecting our communities and leading the way in fighting this new virus.

You are doing a remarkable job of supporting your faculty, staff and students as this situation continues to evolve, more rapidly than we ever could have imagined. With every new development you will have to adapt your strategy and evaluate how it will affect those in your community and beyond. I commend your efforts to bring the assets and resources you have at hand to bear on this national effort, where the best of what universities do will minimize the damage and speed the recovery. I am inspired by the innovation driven by many universities in supporting Canada's multi-sectoral response to this crisis. Many universities have converted labs to testing facilities, students are offering babysitting and grocery help to front line health care workers, residences are being repurposed. This is an effort of historic proportion and I applaud you for it.

On behalf of all Canadians, I want to thank you for your continued leadership. I have the greatest respect for the work you do and the role you play, and I will continue to be your biggest champion and advocate. If there's anything I can do for you, to help you in any way, please do let me know. Even if it's just a friendly call on a particularly difficult day.

I leave you with these words – this too shall pass, and we will all be back together doing those things that we believe are so important for Canada. I wish you all the very best in the coming days and weeks. Keep well and take care of yourself and your family.

With the utmost respect,

The Right Honourable David Johnston
28th Governor General of Canada
Chair of the Rideau Hall Foundation