

ITHACA LANDLORD ALERT MEMORANDUM

Date: March 13, 2020

The global spread of the coronavirus presents highly unusual and difficult challenges throughout the public, private, educational, and business communities. In the Ithaca area, residential landlords will be directly impacted by TC3 and Cornell University's decision to cancel on-campus classes, and to conduct only remote classes following their spring break and by Ithaca College's "phased" response with remote classes until early April. We anticipate that some of your student tenants may decide to leave town, and may not wish to honor their leases. This will require cooperation and flexibility between you, your tenants, and the educational institutions.

Given this uncertainty, a number of area landlord-tenant attorneys had a meeting to discuss these issues. We recommend you do the following:

- Reach out to your student tenants now and find out what their plans are. Are they planning on staying or leaving town? If they are leaving town, when? Encourage open lines of communication.
- Let your student tenants know that you will be flexible given the unusual circumstances. However, you cannot simply allow them to breach their leases. Remind them they've had the benefit of most of the lease at this point. Try to find a third way, such as a sublettor that your tenant may know, or a new short-term lease from a formerly on-campus student newly in need of housing.
- Contact the Denise Thompson in the Cornell Off-Campus Living Office at 607-254-8383 and let them know if you are facing difficulties. We are hearing Cornell will work with local landlords and tenants to assist in various ways.

We have committed to finding answers to the many basic questions coming out of these sudden decisions by our academic institutions. Consistent with our separate duties, we are cooperating in understanding the appropriate legal response to this situation. We will look to share those basic answers promptly. Please do call us with your questions so we can find those answers. We will be meeting regularly to do so.

If you have not already reviewed your leases to comply with the changes in the law last June, please do so now.

As always, please contact your regular attorney with any legal questions or concerns.

Thank you, and stay healthy.

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Handwritten signatures of the attorneys listed above, including Russell Maines, Jeffrey Walker, Christina DuBouchet, Liam Murphy, and Michael Pehinec.