



Memo

To: Chancellors

From: Bill Roper, Interim President

Date: March 6, 2020

Subject: Guidance to Constituent Institutions Related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The following updates and expands previous guidance from the UNC System to constituent institutions. Please publish this guidance on your university's COVID-19 webpage.

Communication with state and local agencies

Each institution should be in close communication with representatives from their local public health officials to remain up-to-date on planning and operational activities. Each Local Health Department has an emergency planning and response committee and each University can and should ask for representation. If there is an incident on a campus the identification of the illness, the testing and the isolation will be coordinated through the Local Health Department. This is a rapidly evolving situation and it is essential that all decisions made are based on accurate and current information.

In addition, institutions with K-12 students need to remain in contact with representatives from their local LEAs. Guidance and protocols related to K-12 students may differ from that pertaining to institutions of higher education.

Communication within the institution

Many divisions and departments across your institution will have their work affected by this outbreak, including but not limited to student affairs, academic affairs, campus safety, housing, and student health centers. The System Office has been convening calls with several of these constituencies to share information and to keep them up to date on the latest developments specific to their areas. Please stay in close contact with your department and division heads in order to coordinate both preparation activities and communication with stakeholders. It is important that the institution's messaging regarding this situation is consistent and accurate. Further, please ensure that your institution's pandemic response procedures are up to date and that you are convening regular meetings of your leadership team to prepare for and address issues that may arise during the course of your institution's response.

University Conferences and Events

All institutions should begin assessing and continue to assess whether to hold campus-based events and conferences involving gatherings of large numbers of individuals who must travel to campus and determine the circumstances in which such a decision would be made. Consideration should be made

regarding community spread, person-to-person contact and overall logistics of these meetings when making decisions.

University Related International Travel

As you are aware, the CDC and the Department of State issue travel notices based on the level of risk involved in traveling to a particular region. Due to the rapid transmission of the COVID-19 virus, these travel notices are getting updated frequently and should be monitored.

At this point, all travel to regions identified as Level 3 by the CDC and/or as a Level 3 or Level 4 by the State Department should be considered very high risk. Such travel should be restricted only to cases of significant extenuating circumstances, or to research or work directly related to the outbreak.

Due to the speed with which the international situation is evolving, any international travel requests or plans should be closely reviewed. Any non-essential work-related international travel, as determined by each institution, including travel to international conferences, meetings, or other events, should be cancelled or rescheduled.

Study Abroad

A number of institutions have recalled students participating in study abroad programs, particularly those programs in affected areas. All institutions should immediately assess their ability to recall all students currently studying abroad and determine the circumstances in which such a decision would be made.

University-Related Domestic Travel

Institutions are encouraged to carefully and prudently evaluate the need for non-essential work-related travel, including travel to domestic conferences, meetings, or other events. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to alternative means of convening, such as through video-conferencing or telephone calls.

All institutions should immediately assess the ability to suspend University-sponsored student travel for conferences, athletics events, and similar activities and determine the circumstances in which such a decision would be made.

Personal Travel

Although the UNC System cannot limit the personal travel of its students and employees, institutions should take steps to strongly discourage travel to areas with active community transmission. Providing information and links to the CDC travel webpage ([here](#)), the State Department travel advisory webpage ([here](#)), and the International Air Transport Association's list of travel restrictions ([here](#)) will be helpful in communicating the risks involved in personal international travel. One important consideration that should be underscored is the potential that those who travel out of the country may have difficulty re-entering the United States.

Return to Campus

Any university community member returning to the United States from an affected area (CDC Levels 2 and 3) should self-quarantine for 14 days before returning to work or school on campus, in consultation with their health care provider. Taking this step is part of acting as responsible members of the community. This self-quarantine should occur at a residence that has a separate room away from other people, a separate bathroom and a separate place to eat. Institutions should consult their pandemic plans with regard to individuals who may need assistance in finding appropriate residences. Employees who self-quarantine should communicate with their supervisors about working remotely during their period of quarantine.

Student health centers should have plans in place for seeing and evaluation of persons for COVID19. These plans, including what care is available and when, should be communicated with students. If a returning traveler must visit the student health clinic, they should contact the health clinic prior to visiting. If students are suspected of having COVID19, institutions should immediately contact their local public health officials.

COVID-19 Diagnosis of a Student or Employee

In consultation with local public health officials, each institution should review their planned response to a diagnosis of student or employee/faculty member with COVID-19.

Discriminatory Behavior

The media has reported incidents of anti-Asian bullying, harassment, and other discriminatory behavior related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Institutions are encouraged to communicate that such behavior is against UNC System policy and will not be tolerated.

General Recommendations

Institutions should communicate to its students and employees the following recommendations:

- Stay at home if you feel sick or present a fever
- Avoid touching your face without first washing your hands
- Clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water, or with hand sanitizer, immediately after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or with your sleeve
- Avoid shaking hands

The UNC System Office continues to monitor the situation and coordinate outbreak-related activity across the system. Please watch for updates, news, and notices of conference calls initiated by the System Office.