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March 12, 2020

TO: University of Alaska Community
FROM: Jim Johnsen
SUBJECT: Major Updates to UA's COVID-19 Response

This week has brought major changes in the international, national and state response and characterization of the COVID-19 situation. The World Health Organization has officially characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic. President Trump has restricted travel to the U.S. from much of Europe, and Gov. Dunleavy has declared a public health emergency.

While there are still no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Alaska, prevention is critical. In an effort to do everything we can to help keep our university communities safe and help slow the spread of the coronavirus we have convened the university's Incident Management Team and—after consultation with the Chair of the Board of Regents, the chancellors, union and governance leaders—I have determined that the following steps are in the best interest of our communities:

- Starting March 23 and potentially for the rest of the semester, most UA courses will be offered using alternate delivery methods (online, audioconference or web-conference, etc.) rather than traditional classroom instruction. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the chancellors for clinical, lab, and other hands-on courses where “social distance” and other personal safety measures can be assured. In addition, we are working to address issues such as computer access and other student needs in ways that maintain social distance.
- We are extending spring break by one week for students in order to allow faculty time to prepare their courses for alternative delivery methods. That means there will be no classes between now and March 23. Employees should return to work unless affected by restrictions established in separate guidance.
- We are asking students living in residence halls to either stay at their permanent residences, if they have traveled there for spring break, or to make plans to return to their permanent or alternative residences by March 17. Temporary access to residence halls will be provided to access needed personal items and study materials. The universities will provide a process to request exceptions for students who have no other residence or who cannot travel.
- We are canceling all events and gatherings of 25 people or more between today and March 31. We will revisit the situation later this month and make a decision then regarding events for the rest of the spring semester.
- We are expanding the restrictions on university-related travel.
- We are planning extra steps to clean and sanitize university facilities.
- We are staying in communication with the U.S. Department of Education and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to ensure accreditation stays in place.

- We are expanding requirements for employees and others coming to campus to stay home/stay away after returning from travel to certain areas outside Alaska or if they have possible exposure to COVID-19.

More details on these changes are attached and will also be available on our University of Alaska coronavirus website. Please also look for more information from your chancellors next week regarding specific details for each university, and please stay alert for additional changes.

The chancellors and I recognize that these changes will present significant challenges to our students and their families, and our employees. Please know that this decision was made after much deliberation, relying on expert advice from public health agencies and the experiences of other universities nationwide. Our primary concern is and will continue to be the safety of our students and employees. Thank you for your patience, perseverance and teamwork as we work through the incredible challenges posed by this situation.

University of Alaska COVID-19 policy guidance Travel and community restrictions

Updated 3/12/20 – Replaces all previous versions

Note defined terms at the end of this document. Chancellors may provide exceptions to this guidance for research and other essential activities.

Outbound Travel Restrictions

Travel for university business is prohibited to all destinations outside the United States and to any US communities experiencing ANY level of community transmission.

Inbound/Return Travel Restrictions/UA Community Restrictions

Who do the restrictions apply to?

Community restrictions apply to employees, students and campus visitors who are not showing symptoms of COVID-19 but who meet any of these criteria:

- Are traveling to UA, or returning to UA, from travel in U.S. communities that are experiencing community transmission, as well as from travel outside the United States, within the past 14 days; or
- In the last 14 days have been in “close contact” with someone who has been confirmed to have COVID-19, or with someone who is COVID-19 symptomatic and under investigation by the CDC or other health authorities; or
- Have been a passenger on a cruise ship in the last 14 days.

What are the restrictions?

Unless otherwise directed by UA or the appropriate health authorities the following applies:

Affected Students

- **Affected Residential Students:** If you are remaining in the residence halls by exception, stay in your room as much as possible, self-observe your condition and practice social distancing for 14 days after travel or contact. Changing circumstances may require on-campus quarantine or departure from campus. (Note: most students will be required to move off campus, and most in person classes are being converted to alternative or e-delivery.)
- **Affected Non-Residential Students:** Do not come to campus.

Affected Employees

- Stay home from work and self-observe for 14 days after travel or contact. Employees may be assigned to work at home, or be placed on paid administrative leave or sick leave, if ill. [Additional guidance for employees and supervisors](#) has been provided by Human Resources.

Affected Visitors

- Visitors, including attendees at museums, libraries, events, conferences and gatherings, are asked to self-identify and stay away from campuses, events or gatherings during the 14-day period after travel or contact. University employees and students are encouraged to explore options for visitors to participate in meetings and conferences electronically.

What should you do if you are ill and are confirmed to have COVID-19, have traveled in a high-risk area, or have been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

You Must:

- Seek and follow medical advice;
- Students who are away from campus should not return until cleared medically. If you are living on campus, notify your Residence Life or on-campus housing office.
- Employees must alert their supervisors and not return to work until medically cleared.

What if I am planning personal travel to an area with active COVID-19 cases?

Be mindful of possible travel disruptions as well as possible restrictions on return. We have set up a [secure online form](#) for students and employees to use to let us know if they have traveled to a region with active cases or think they may have been exposed some other way.

Remember – if you have other illnesses such as colds or flu, simply stay home!

Definitions

Communities with “community transmission

There is presently no CDC listing of U.S. communities experiencing community transmission. However, the following Johns Hopkins University site provides useful information. At this point UA does not regard deplaning and reboarding entirely within the Sea-Tac Airport as traveling from a community experiencing community transmission. Travelers should use their best judgment in assessing whether the communities they have visited are experiencing community transmission, erring on the side of caution.

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsoptions/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

Close contact

Close contact is defined as—

- a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case; or
- b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

Self-observation/self-observe

Self-observation means people should remain alert for subjective fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. If they feel feverish or develop cough or difficulty breathing during the self-observation period, they should take their temperature, self-isolate, limit contact with others, and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider or their local health department to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

Social distancing

Social distancing means remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.

University of Alaska COVID-19 policy guidance Residence halls/on-campus housing

Updated 3/12/20 – Replaces all previous versions

In an effort to reduce the risk to students living on campus, the university is requiring students to leave residence halls no later than March 17. There is no need to move out completely at this time but you must follow this guidance:

Students who are currently at their out-of-state permanent residence for Spring Break

Do not return to the university. Stay where you are and prepare to resume your coursework via distance delivery on March 23. Contact your university's Residence Life or on-campus housing office to inform them of your status. If this situation persists we will make arrangements for return of or access to your belongings.

Students who are currently at their in-state permanent residence for Spring Break

While we urge you not to return to campus, you may briefly return to the residence halls to retrieve necessities. Return to your in-state permanent residence and prepare to resume your coursework via distance delivery on March 23. If this situation persists we will make arrangements for return of or access to your belongings.

Students who live in on-campus single-family housing.

You may remain at your apartment or home and prepare to resume your coursework via distance delivery on March 23. Follow university community restrictions if you have recently traveled or are have had high risk contacts.

International students who are currently at their permanent residences for Spring Break

Do not return to the university. Stay where you are and prepare to resume your coursework via distance delivery on March 23. Contact your university's Residence Life or on-campus housing office and International Programs office to inform them of your status. If this situation persists we will make arrangements for return of or access to your belongings.

Students who are currently living in on-campus housing and did not leave for Spring Break

Please be prepared to leave your residence hall and return to your permanent or an alternate residence no later than March 17. There is no need to move out completely at this time. If this situation persists we will make arrangements for return of or access to your belongings. Prepare to resume your coursework via distance delivery on March 23. Please contact your university's Residence Life or on-campus housing office to inform them of your status.

Exceptions and extensions

The university will grant exceptions and/or extensions to students with extenuating circumstances. Those may include:

- Students who cannot return to their permanent residences
- Students who cannot access online or distance courses from their permanent residences
- International students who are unable to return to their home countries at this time
- Students for whom it is safer to remain in on-campus housing

Please contact your Residence Life office or on-campus housing office if you need to request an exception or extension.

University of Alaska COVID-19 policy guidance Events and gatherings – non-academic

Updated 3/12/20 – Replaces all previous versions

In an effort to reduce the risk of the spread of the coronavirus on our campuses and communities, the following restrictions apply to events and gatherings at all university campuses and buildings.

Restrictions

All events and gatherings, including business meetings, with 25 or more attendees should be canceled, postponed to a later date or, when feasible, conducted via audioconference, webconference or some other distance delivery mechanism.

Duration

The restrictions are in place until at least March 31. The university will revisit the restrictions before the end of March and issue additional guidance.

Events and gatherings of fewer than 25 attendees

Organizers can have the gathering, but are encouraged to take measures to encourage maintaining distance between attendees, such as having the gathering in a larger venue.

Non-university affiliated events

These restrictions apply to all events and gatherings on university campuses and in university buildings, regardless of university affiliation.

University of Alaska COVID-19 policy guidance Academic course alternate delivery

Updated 3/12/20 – Replaces all previous versions

In an effort to reduce the risk to students and employees, the university is suspending most in-person course delivery for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester. Courses will be taught using alternate delivery starting on March 23.

Extending Spring Break

In order to prepare for alternate delivery of coursework, the university is extending Spring Break for students by one week. There will be no classes through March 22. Classes will resume March 23.

Types of alternate delivery

Faculty members should make their own decisions about what type of alternate delivery is best suited to their courses. Options could include things like audioconference or webconference, Blackboard, fully online delivery or recorded lectures. Faculty members should work directly with their department heads, deans and provosts if they have questions. In addition, OIT and e-Learning units at each of the universities have partnered to offer support to faculty members. (link)

Labs, Clinicals, and other hands-on courses

Each university will work with faculty members and units that offer labs, clinicals, and other hands-on courses to determine whether those courses or labs can be delivered via distance. If so, they should be. If not, every effort should be made to ensure students can avoid close contact with each other during lab or other hands-on activities.