Dear Mason Patriots,

In an effort to provide the most up to date information about potential impacts related to the Coronavirus, the university wants to share the precautions that are being taken, recommendations on how to prepare for an outbreak, and information for travelers. Public health officials and the university are concerned about the number of international incidents of coronavirus and the potential for an outbreak in the United States. George Mason University is maintaining normal operations and there are no changes to classes, events, or administrative offices at this time. However, future efforts to mitigate the spread of this disease might have potential impacts on university functions.

What you can do to protect yourself: The Centers for Disease for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to stress general precautions to prevent the spread of communicable diseases: wash your hands often, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, decrease stress, and limit or eliminate the use of tobacco products. Anyone exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease should to remain out of class, away from work, and avoid others for the duration of the illness and for 24 hours after symptoms abate. For more information about communicable disease response procedures at Mason, please see the Communicable Disease Guide.

Precautionary Planning: The university’s communicable disease and continuity of operations plans are designed to maintain critical and student support functions (e.g., dining, housing, administrative functions, and facilities management) during a closure or regional emergency. Additional guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding continuity of instruction, research, and operations will be provided if necessary.

The following recommendations are not intended to cause alarm or anxiety; but rather to help our community avoid future hardship if an outbreak occurs in our region or at Mason. We encourage everyone to consider the possibility of a widespread outbreak in order to be mentally and physically prepared for what might become an unusual situation that impacts our academic, personal, and professional lives. As a precaution, students, faculty, and staff should consider the potential impact of an outbreak in our region and prepare accordingly by:

- Although not necessary at this time, consider purchasing medication, household items, and food that will be required if self-isolation is recommended;
- Evaluating childcare options if public schools and daycare facilities temporarily close;
- Reevaluating future international travel plans to destinations where coronavirus is emerging as a public health threat; and,
Considering ways that you can limit contact with others at school, work, and in public if health officials recommend avoiding others and cancellation of public events.

The university is prepared to provide support to students who need assistance. For example, The Patriot Pantry provides food and necessities to students in need because of financial difficulties and Mason Dining can deliver meals to residential students who remain in their residence due to an illness.

**Travel Restrictions**: The United States has implemented restrictions on international travel to and from China; however, additional countries may be subject to travel restrictions if this outbreak continues. The university has suspended future university-sponsored or university-related travel to China and South Korea. The university is reviewing travel to Iran, Italy, and Japan based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel warnings and Department of State travel advisories. The university will review travel to countries under CDC warning level 2 and will suspend travel to countries issued a CDC warning level 3. Travel exceptions can be granted on a case-by-case basis in accordance with University Policy 1134: University-Sponsored or University-Related International Travel.

- **Employees**: Faculty and staff traveling abroad should consult with the Office of Risk Management before scheduling or departing the country as travel restrictions and recommendations can change daily. The Office of Risk Management can be reached by email or at 703-993-2599 to discuss travel plans and precautions.
- **Students**: The Global Education Office is closely monitoring this situation and will communicate directly with students participating in study abroad and exchange programs impacted by travel restrictions or additional precautions.

**Travelers Returning from Asia and CDC Warning Level 2 and 3 Countries**: Students, faculty and staff, returning from a country under a CDC Warning Level 2 or 3 must contact their supervisor Safety, Emergency, and Enterprise Risk Management to discuss their return to campus. Travelers returning from countries under a CDC warning level 3 may be required to self-isolate for up to 14 days upon return to the U.S. The university is putting these precautions in place to ensure that returning travelers receive appropriate support if absences from class or work are recommended by the University, CDC, or the local health department.

**Spring Break and Summer Travel**: Students planning independent travel over spring break should stay informed of CDC travel precautions and consider alternative plans if new restrictions are implemented before or during travel. The university strongly discourages travel to China and South Korea as you may be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon your return. If you have concerns about international travel, please discuss your travel plans with Mason’s Global Education Office.
**Respect and tolerance:** Mason is a diverse institution and as such, we have students, faculty and staff from all over the world. As always, we encourage everyone to treat others with dignity and respect and to not ostracize specific communities based on unconfirmed reports or suspicion of illness.

**Misinformation:** Although public health officials and medical experts have been working hard to evaluate this novel virus, uncertainty still exists and there is misinformation spread on social media. Please continue to refer back to reputable medical sources such as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) or the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int) for updated, accurate information about coronavirus and necessary precautions. If you have questions about your own health, please contact a healthcare provider.

The university is monitoring this situation closely and is taking precautions in accordance with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov) and [Virginia Department of Health](https://www.dhsova.org) guidance. As new information about the coronavirus outbreak and potential impact on the campus community becomes available, updates will be sent via email. All communications regarding coronavirus and the university’s guidance is available online [here](https://www.gmu.edu).

Safety, Emergency, & Enterprise Risk Management
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