Dear Mason Patriots,

There are no confirmed cases of coronavirus associated with George Mason University, but we want to make you aware of recent events in our region that may impact the health of our community and campus operations. Cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The university has been in contact with the health department and the risk to the Mason community remains low. However, as this outbreak evolves it becomes more likely that someone in our community will either be exposed or potentially become ill with the coronavirus.

The university is actively monitoring this situation. This includes updating our response plans, gathering guidance from state and federal public health officials, and collaborating with other institutions of higher education in our region and across the country to implement best practices. We encourage all members of our community to monitor announcements from the university, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and public health officials and act accordingly.

Please visit the university’s coronavirus website for more details about this situation. Most importantly, stay home if you are unwell, seek medical attention if necessary, and practice good personal hygiene.

If You Feel Unwell: Anyone, regardless of potential exposure or not, who experiences symptoms consistent with coronavirus (cough, fever, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing) should contact their healthcare provider to receive medical attention and/or advice. Remain home for the duration of your illness and report suspected exposures to coronavirus to the local health department. Students who reside on campus must contact Student Health Services if they become ill or suspect they have coronavirus exposure or illness, and should limit contact with roommates, friends, and family as much as possible until further guidance is provided by Student Health Services.

Individuals with Severe Chronic Medical Conditions: Effective March 9, individuals with health conditions who are considered to be a high risk for COVID-19 complications should make arrangements to remain out of class and away from work. Faculty who are at high risk should convert their coursework to alternative teaching methods to avoid contact with sick individuals; please visit the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning for information on how to maintain instructional continuity. Staff who are at high risk should contact their supervisor to discuss telework, flexible work, or accommodations to maintain social distancing while at work. More information is available from HR at the Employee Relations website.

Looking Forward: At this time the university is maintaining normal operations; however, the university anticipates that additional precautions may be necessary in the near future. All members of our community should reconsider future travel, anticipate cancellation of events, and plan for disruptions. Additional precautions will be announced via email.
As a reminder, the most important precautions you can take are to wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, avoid contact with people who are sick, and staying home if you are ill. Please consider purchasing essential items that you may need if you are required to self-isolate for up to 14 days. We share this information not to cause alarm but to ensure that you, your family, and friends are taking appropriate actions to prepare for these possibilities. The CDC provides guidance on how to prepare for an outbreak in our community.

For questions regarding the university response please contact safety@gmu.edu.

If you are a student experiencing symptoms or with possible exposure to coronavirus, please contact Student Health Services, 703-993-2831.

For the latest public health updates or for questions regarding the Virginia cases or general coronavirus questions, contact: Virginia Department of Health hotline: 1-877-ASK-VDH3 (1-877-275-8343).

Respectfully,

David Farris, PhD
Executive Director,
Safety & Emergency Management

And

Dr. Lisa Park
Executive Director, Student Health Services