

March 11, 2020

Dear Clarion University community,

We have been vigilant in monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This includes planning in the event the outbreak reaches any of our campuses, and most importantly, keeping our students, faculty and staff safe.

It is important to note that no suspected cases of coronavirus have been reported in any of our campus areas, including Clarion, Venango and Somerset counties, as well as Pittsburgh.

By now, you may have heard that other Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education schools and some schools around the country have extended their current spring break and/or have moved all classes to an online approach for a period of time. State System universities do not follow a common calendar, and, while most of the PASSHE universities are on spring break this week, ours was last week, making our situation different. The location and size, as well as current conditions in the areas near campuses, dictate how each campus makes those decisions. At this point in time, conditions do not indicate a benefit to suspending our face-to-face instruction.

Increased efforts have been taken to clean and disinfect surface areas more frequently and to share information on protecting oneself against the virus. This information is available at <https://www.clarion.edu/coronavirus>

University leadership and a team of subject matter experts are meeting on a regular basis to update our current Emergency Response Plan to address developing issues and to refine information on potential actions. We remain in contact with various outside agencies, including the national Center for Disease Control, Pennsylvania Department of Health, the State System Office in Harrisburg, and both the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and National Collegiate Athletic Association.

We are looking at all functions at the university, including:

- Actions to protect students, faculty and staff.
- Contingency plans in the event that students in university housing become ill.
- Preparing faculty to deliver a high quality experience via alternative means, if necessary.
- Moving to alternative class delivery, if necessary.
- University events:
 - Most university events will continue as scheduled at this time, but will only be open to students and employees with valid university IDs. Event organizers should evaluate the impact of this decision on the viability of the event;
 - Check with the campus organizer to confirm that an event will be held;

- Commencement(s) are currently planned for this spring;
check <https://clarion.edu/commencement> for the latest information.
- Ensuring that critical university work can continue.
- University supported travel:
- Given the widespread occurrences of the virus, effective immediately and until further notice, university-sponsored travel is suspended. We are monitoring PSAC and NCAA recommendations regarding the travel and competition of student-athletes and have made no major changes at this time.
- Personal travel:
- All students, faculty and staff are advised to follow travel alerts from the [CDC](#). All individuals who are returning from locations with increased risk of exposure are asked to check in with their local department of public health.
- Study Abroad:
- We continue to work with host universities to monitor occurrences of coronavirus in their areas. The majority of our students have returned to the United States and have been instructed to self-isolate at home for a 14-day period.
- Chartwells maintains an action plan for on-campus dining services.

Please follow the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations](#) on how to prevent the spread of coronavirus, or to prevent becoming ill yourself:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Stay home when you are sick;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

This situation is evolving daily, and plans are subject to changing quickly. Additional information will be shared as it becomes available. We will continue to monitor and make adjustments as needed, with the safety of our campus community as our priority.

Governor Wolf, Legislative Leaders, and Secretary of Health Rachel Levine are planning to provide an update on coronavirus at 4 p.m. today. We will monitor the update and adjust plans if necessary.

I want to thank everyone for their patience and help as we adjust our normal ways of doing things. These adjustments, though disappointing to some, will keep our campus community safe. This is a time to demonstrate, even more, our caring Clarion ways toward one another.

Accurate and current information is available to explain most situations related to the virus. I highly recommend that you read this information to quell any anxiety you have. If you have additional questions about this virus or the issues related to its impact on campus or your daily lives, please check the campus links at <https://www.clarion.edu/coronavirus> or contact Jim McGee, Wellness Center director.

Dr. Dale