



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

To: CUNY Faculty and Staff
From: Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Ph.D.
Date: March 2, 2020
Re: Human Resources Update -- Coronavirus

As we continue to monitor developments related to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), it is important to gather facts, take preventive measures, and plan for a variety of scenarios. As I am sure you know, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) has published preliminary recommendations for organizations to consider in case of local transmissions of the coronavirus in the United States.

Although the first case of coronavirus in New York City was just confirmed, the risk to New Yorkers remains low. The NYC Department of Health has “not detected community transmission of COVID-19 in New York City.” Community transmission means the disease is spreading and the source of the infection is unknown. However, it has raised our level of concern and we are stepping up our ongoing preparations for the possibility of our city and campuses being impacted by the virus.

We are also giving our facilities extra attention in terms of restocking hand sanitizers, soaps and other cleaning supplies and ensuring that there are plenty of places throughout common areas where students, faculty, and staff can wash or sanitize their hands. Clear signage regarding proper hygiene (washing hands and covering coughs, etc.) will be displayed in restrooms and in various common areas around campus and CUNY offices.

For our employees, please note:

Employees who are sick and exhibiting symptoms of acute respiratory illness are asked to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer) and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines. Employees should notify their supervisor and keep them informed of their absence. For the health and safety of all employees, staff members who report to work exhibiting these symptoms may be sent home.

Employees returning from a country designated as “Level 3” by the CDC are to contact their Human Resources office by phone or email before returning to work.

Employees who may have international travel plans should check the [CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for the country of travel.

The University also recommends regularly checking the following resources for updates:

- [CUNY.edu/coronavirus](#)
- [New York State Department of Health](#)
- [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [CUNY Research Foundation](#)

We understand that employees may be experiencing heightened levels of anxiety during this time. We want to remind you that CUNY's Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) is available to work with you toward addressing this. CUNY's EAP may be reached at 1-888-993-7650 or www.deeroaks.com.

The NYC Health Department is preparing for all possible scenarios, and we will continue to monitor and communicate with them about any potential impact to our campuses.

Please be assured that CUNY is taking this possible threat very seriously and we are actively making and updating plans to ensure employee and student safety, as well as continuity of our business and operations across a range of possible scenarios.

As you know, CUNY's academic systems, including its learning management platform Blackboard and our cloud collaboration tools Microsoft Office 365 for Education and Dropbox, can be helpful ways to deliver academic instruction in a remote/online manner, should the need arise. Furthermore, CUNY's Virtual Desktop environment and many similar Virtual Desktop environments at the colleges provide students, faculty, and staff with remote access to some of the software products commonly found in computer labs across the University, again should the need arise.

We will continue to communicate with you about our ongoing efforts regarding the coronavirus.

Should you have any immediate questions or concerns, please contact your College Human Resources office.