Dear ESF Community,

The new coronavirus that started in Wuhan, China, has infected nearly 99,000 people globally as of March 5, killing more than 3,300. At least 11 Americans have died of the virus, many in Washington State where authorities are saying the virus may have been circulating for weeks. Nationwide, there have been more than 200 cases of the virus, including dozens of Americans who were repatriated from a cruise ship quarantined off Japan.

SUNY and all of us at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry are taking the situation seriously. Because it is impossible to predict what will happen and when, we are preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. The following information is offered to ensure everyone has the same information and to help people plan accordingly. As we approach spring break, I urge faculty, staff, and students to consider the best ways to safeguard their personal health and well-being as well as the health and well-being of those around them.

Sincerely
David Amberg
Interim President

FAQs Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak

Will the college sponsor any spring break study abroad trips?
No. All ESF study abroad spring break trips have been canceled.

Why did the college cancel spring break trips?
In concert with decisions made by SUNY, the college decided to cancel spring break study abroad trips. Together, SUNY officials and the college reached this decision after considering thoughts shared by experts at the New York State Department of Health and consulting situation reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization. Airlines are scaling back service, which makes it difficult to ensure that travelers will be able to return to the United States as planned. We also expect that travel bans will be instituted possibly leading our students to become stranded for an extended period of time. Upon return to the United States, travelers will face health screenings and potential quarantines.
Can residents of Centennial Hall stay in Centennial Hall during Spring Break?
Residents of Centennial Hall are allowed to stay in Centennial Hall during Spring Break, but for safety and security purposes, University Police would like to know who is in the building. If residents plan to stay, they must complete this online form: https://forms.gle/gvspNHqRsenK2tEh9
Those who stay will not be able to eat at the Trailhead. Those who have an SU meal plan can find details here: https://foodservices.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/Spring-break-all-hours-2020.pdf

How will students in study abroad trips complete the semester?
SUNY and ESF are committed to every student’s academic success. The college is working with faculty advisors on a variety of creative solutions that will ensure academic requirements are met.

What about students and faculty who have plans to conduct research or attend conferences abroad this spring?
Out of an abundance of caution, the college strongly discourages all international travel. All travel at this time carries risk, including being stranded in the host country and potential quarantines upon return to the United States.

Will the college authorize international travel for college business to CDC-level 3 countries?
No. The college will not authorize official business travel to countries the CDC has designated as level 3 countries. Currently, these countries are China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy. We are also considering banning travel for official college business to countries with a CDC level 2 warning.

What about travel to other countries?
The college strongly discourages ALL international travel and is monitoring CDC recommendations. As other countries are added to the level 3 list, the college will add them to the restricted list. All travel at this time carries risk, including health screenings at airport and potential quarantines upon return to the United States. Furthermore, airports and airplanes bring large numbers of people into close proximity, which carries the risk of transmission from undiagnosed carriers of the virus. Currently, the college requests that faculty, staff, and students communicate ALL international travel plans, including personal travel to the Office of International Education via this form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSde7Op9qhRASrXfaW5_SgqoiXHng637y5NoaZNfmRqhGe5oiA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Is domestic travel restricted?
Domestic travel is currently not restricted, but this may change if the outbreak expands in the U.S. We expect more hotspots to develop domestically, so our general recommendation is to avoid all travel.

If I travel internationally – who should I tell?
Please share personal and college-related international travel plans with the Office of International Education via this form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSde7Op9qhRASrXfaW5_SgqoiXHng637y5NoaZNfmRqhGe5oiA/viewform?usp=sf_link

What about international travel during the summer session? Have
decisions been made?
No decisions have been made about international travel during the summer session as of yet.

What should I do to reduce my risk?
- CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible because handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs and chemicals on hands. But if soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

How can I find the latest reliable information on the COVID-19 outbreak?
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website
- The World Health Organization (WHO) website