

Message from NDU-P on COVID-19 Guidance - Update #3

21 March 2020

NDU Teammates:

In this note, I want to cover three topics: the health and wellness of our shipmates, changes to our operating posture, and contact info for key support functions.

But let me begin by first thanking and congratulating you all for leading the university through a challenging transition to successful distance delivery of our academic mission and of our mission support. I also want to highlight the work of ITD to enable our virtual environment and of HRD to facilitate telework opportunities. I appreciate the magnitude of this effort, and am impressed by everyone's ability to continue serving our students while reducing the risk of coronavirus transmission on our campuses.

We will continue to use technology to continue our working groups, webinars, councils and committees. I intend to maintain my battle-rhythm of monthly Town Halls and will also do so virtually. Stay tuned for details.

Health and Wellness: To date, no NDU faculty, staff, or students have reported having tested positive for COVID-19. 23 of our shipmates have reported as "COVID-19 Affected" status, which includes those in Directed Quarantine, Self-Quarantine due to possible exposure, and those awaiting COVID-19 test results. As our internal self-reporting becomes more routine and standardized, and also with the increase of affected individuals in the DMV area, we can expect the numbers of COVID-19 Affected to rise. Your personal contributions such as observing recommended personal hygiene and social distancing practices, and to the institutional actions below remain the most important actions to reduce the risk of community transmission of the coronavirus on our campuses.

Changes to our operating posture: As we respond to the extraordinary challenges presented by COVID-19, we will remain focused on protecting the health and wellness of our people, while also meeting our academic mission in these circumstances. That means that while NDU isn't "closed," we have reduced to a minimum the number of people required on campus to support the mission. We are also aggressively pursuing efforts to reduce risk for those who are needed to be physically present.

I want to stress that this serious situation warrants our serious proactive activities. We have cancelled travel and also cancelled delegations, visits, and speakers from off campus. We have distributed hygiene information and installed hand sanitizer stations throughout campus, with reminders to encourage recommended hygiene practices. We have also implemented social distancing measures across the university.

The most important step we have taken is to move our work into a virtual environment. Since Monday, 16 March, faculty and students have been conducting all JPME II classes online. We also maximized the use of telework flexibility across the university. This week we doubled the number of workers authorized telework and, under new OPM authorities and where appropriate, also approved people to work from home even without a telework agreement. This enabled a reduction by about 90% of the personnel required to be on-campus, and we are working to reduce this further.

While most staff functions are now being conducted remotely, not every function can be accomplished from off-campus. Thus, directors are responsible for determining which personnel are required on campus, and when. As we must continue to fulfill our mission, some of our shipmates (e.g., ITD, Facilities, and Security) must be on campus to support our operations.

I want to stress that supervisors must ensure that every member of our team who is not required to be on campus to meet mission requirements should work from home. Supervisors must also consider that not every employee is at equal risk, so every employee and every function must be individually assessed on a case-by-case basis. Consistent with our first priority to care for our workforce, personal COVID-19 risk factors should be a consideration in determining workforce options such as telework. These risk factors include age and underlying health issues (e.g., diabetes, circulatory/respiratory complications, compromised immune system, etc.).

Academic and Business Operations Status Report: A report on NDU's operating status is on the NDU SharePoint Coronavirus page at <https://portal.ndu.edu/Pages/Coronavirus-Updates.aspx>. This report also contains contact information for all academic and business operations functions. This is a handy Desk Reference for accessing these functions. It will be updated throughout the COVID-19 event.

By taking care of each other and ourselves, I am confident that we will successfully deliver on our academic mission while protecting our people.

This requires that we safely stay in communication with our teams, and follow the recommended personal hygiene best practices (e.g., hand washing, avoid touching face, social distancing, and self-isolation if feeling sick).

I appreciate the flexibility this requires and I know I can count on every member of our NDU team - faculty, staff, and students - to heed the guidance and take preventive actions to protect yourselves and others from the spread of this virus.

Thank you for everything you are doing!

r/ FJR