



Colleagues -

As we are all aware, COVID-19 continues to spread and affect many parts of the U.S. and the rest of the world. The health of our community is our most important priority. With cases now being reported in North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota the risk is increasing in our communities.

While there are relatively few confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region, the number of cases nationally continues to grow - now is the best time to act in ways that slow the spread of COVID-19. After consulting with the Chancellor, North Dakota medical experts, and learning from colleges/universities that have been dealing COVID-19 for several weeks – we are announcing the following protective measures and actions to limit the spread of COVID-19:

Instruction:

NDSCS will implement remote/virtual teaching and learning practices wherever possible. Students who are planning to leave campus for Spring Break should plan to **not return until April 5th. NDSCS will facilitate all teaching and learning remotely, through varied distance delivery methods, from March 23 through April 3rd.** To the greatest extent possible, faculty will utilize technology to enable student learning through distance/technology delivery methods. This will vary greatly depending on course learning outcomes and content. Information and resources will be sent shortly to the faculty listserv regarding resources, strategies, and options for alternative, remote/virtual instruction. All academic departments should review and implement their *Continuity of Instruction* plans as discussed at the recent department chair meeting. Students will be notified momentarily of this decision.

College Operations:

NDSCS will remain open and staffed throughout Spring Break (March 16 – 20) and during the weeks of Remote/Virtual Teaching and Learning (March 23 through April 3rd). All employees should continue their regular work schedules unless advised otherwise by their supervisor. The College will continue daily operations and employees will be encouraged to practice social distancing (i.e. avoiding events and situations that put them in close contact with many people). Meetings or other gatherings may be shifted to virtual/remote options, postponed, and/or cancelled. If there is a concern or question regarding health restrictions or limitations, please consult with your supervisor.

We will evaluate the situation and communicate a decision on further actions by the end of the week of March 30th, with potential to resume face-to-face classes on April 6th. Again, this decision is yet to be determined and will be communicated. Please watch your email.

Student Housing & Dining:

One of the main factors for shifting to the remote/virtual teaching and learning weeks was the need to significantly reduce the density on campus, especially in our residence halls.

Residents are being asked to take essential belongings, academic materials, laptops and medications with them for Spring Break and not return to the residence halls until at least April 5th.



We anticipate that the majority of students will return to their permanent residence and engage in their learning remotely from March 23 through April 3rd. Dining options will be available, information will be shared with those students staying during March 23rd – April 5th.

We recognize that some students may be unable to return to their permanent residence for various reasons and will need to stay in their residence halls. For instance: some students are from a great distance away and are not be able to return home at this time, some students may be unable to access online classes in their home location, and/or some may need to stay for other reasons.

The Department of Residence Life will provide additional guidance to students. Residence halls will remain available to students as necessary, but we expect the majority of students to return home, leaving the residence halls much emptier and making it easier for the remaining students to maintain social distance. Students who stay in residence halls should be prepared for a reduced campus experience with limited opportunities for interaction and entertainment.

Travel:

The risk of contracting COVID-19 increases substantially the more you are around other people. Travel frequently puts us in close contact with many people, such as in airplanes, airports, restaurants, and large events or gatherings.

Please consider whether your travel is necessary, and if it could possibly be postponed or altogether canceled. If you must travel, try as much as possible to practice social distancing by avoiding large crowds and keeping space between you and others. Practice frequent hand-hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based product. Once you return home, please be vigilant for the development of any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

If you travel, you may face a higher risk contracting COVID-19, significant delays in returning, and/or the requirement to self-isolate upon your return, all of which could significantly impact your professional and personal obligations.

People who are at higher risk of more severe outcomes from COVID-19 should strongly consider foregoing any travel. This would include people over the age of 60, or those with underlying chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases, or immunosuppressive conditions.

All campus community members should be aware that if you travel, you may be required to self-isolate for 14 days depending on where you're traveling to and from, even if you do not exhibit symptoms. You can view a list of currently impacted areas that require a self-quarantine here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>. Note that this list could change at any time, including while you are on your trip.

Additionally, the North Dakota Department of Health is encouraging anyone who is traveling to use this assessment: https://ndhealth.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eb7sJjKhR2UfB7n



Reminders & Resources:

Individuals can help protect themselves from COVID-19 by practicing everyday [preventative behaviors](#):

- Stay home when sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water.
- Frequently clean often touched surfaces.

Symptoms of COVID-19 in people who have been exposed can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

The Centers for Disease Control [recommends](#) that adults over the age of 60 and those with multiple underlying health conditions refrain from group activities. These individuals are twice as likely to develop serious COVID-19 illness.

For up-to-date information from the North Dakota Department of Health on COVID-19, please visit:

<https://www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions/coronavirus>

Some individuals may not feel like COVID-19 will affect them if they are young or healthy; please remember that we are members of a larger community and could carry it to those with compromised immune systems or to older or higher-risk people. There is no vaccine or protection at this time. **We ask everyone to consider the safety and health of our entire community.**

The safety of our community is our top priority. We realize that these actions will cause disruption—and that you will have additional questions on the above information—but the risk of not acting outweighs the inconvenience of these temporary measures. We also realize that you will have additional questions about the above information, please consult with your supervisor and watch your e-mail for regular updates.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we deal with this constantly evolving situation. We will continue to adapt our plans as information changes; you can expect regular updates from me.

John Richman, Ph.D.

President | North Dakota State College of Science