

SPECIAL BULLETIN TO FACULTY AND STAFF

MARCH 6, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Earlier this week, we published a special bulletin regarding the recent outbreak of COVID-19, a respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus.

The University has established a multi-disciplinary team that is continuously monitoring the circumstances and actively coordinating campus resources, responses, and communications. We are also in regular communication with public health officials and other health care professionals.

Currently, there are no suspected cases of COVID-19 on our Gaming, Austria, or Steubenville, Ohio, campuses nor have there been any confirmed cases in Ohio. Currently, the University is operating on our standard schedule. That said, work, classes, and activities could be modified in the future based upon a change in circumstances, so we wanted to provide additional information specifically geared toward the employment setting.

The University is implementing certain pandemic disease protocols for employees. The purpose of these protocols is to protect the health and welfare of Franciscan University employees and students by reducing disease transmission, protecting individuals at a higher risk of disease-related complications, and allowing flexible leave policies to ensure that employees can provide appropriate care to themselves and their families. These protocols will remain in effect for such duration as the University deems necessary in consultation with our internal team and public health officials.

[Certain people are at an increased risk for complications](#) from the disease including those diagnosed with chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, immune system disorders/diseases; and individuals 60 years of age or older. If you are at increased risk or believe you may be at increased risk for COVID-19 complications, please consult with your health care provider for more information about [monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19](#). While most people with COVID-19

will be able to recover at home, people who are at higher risk who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should seek medical advice sooner than people who are younger and/or otherwise healthy. Those with increased risk may receive direction from their physician to avoid the workplace for a specified duration. Employees should provide Human Resources with documentation of this directive in order to obtain the necessary leave time and qualify for application of accrued sick and/or vacation time.

All employees should be vigilant and [self-monitor](#) for any signs or symptoms COVID-19. Employees who have contracted the disease, are [demonstrating symptoms of the disease](#), who are [providing direct care to someone with the disease](#), or who have traveled to an [area with an active CDC alert](#) are required to notify the University and are prohibited from reporting to work for a minimum of two weeks. In such instances, the employee will qualify for the application of accrued sick and/or vacation time.

If an employee is required to be out of work for a period of time, it may be beneficial for the employee and the University to explore alternative work arrangements (work from home, changing hours, etc.). If an alternative work arrangement is agreed to by the University and the employee, the employee will be paid for actual hours worked.

The University reserves the right to establish policies and practices to ensure operational continuity. If necessary, the University may establish flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) when possible to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if public health officials recommend the use of social distancing. If necessary, the University reserves the right and may require employees to conduct their work differently (e.g. online or remotely) or work different positions either within their department or within other departments to adequately meet business needs.

The University cares about the well-being of every person in our community. Accordingly, the University strongly encourages everyone on campus to follow standard Center for Disease Control (CDC) preventive guidelines:

- Practice good hygiene. [Wash your hands often with soap and water](#) for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or shaking hands with

people. If soap and water are not available, the CDC recommends using a hand sanitizer made with at least 60 percent alcohol but warns that these solutions do not kill all germs.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you are experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath, visit the University's Wellness Center or your health care provider immediately.
- Minimize physical contact with casual acquaintances by substituting a polite nod or other gesture instead of handshakes.
- Practice respiratory etiquette. The main way the virus spreads from person to person is in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, it is important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. If you do not have a tissue, you should cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not your hands.
- Disinfect surfaces that may have been contaminated.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill or think they may be ill.
- Stay home if you feel ill or have any signs of respiratory illness.
- Get a flu vaccine as recommended by the CDC during the flu season. If you have been prescribed flu antiviral medication, please make sure to take it.
- Please follow the advice of your health care provider.

Also, the University encourages everyone to stay current with the information available on the CDC's website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>).

The University will provide ongoing communication as circumstances develop. Please let me know if you have any question or concerns. And please join me in praying for all those affected by COVID-19.

Peace and blessings,

Brenan Pergi

