Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

With recent news related to the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) globally and reports of isolated cases within the US, we are writing to provide an update regarding campus planning and recommendations.

We have established a coronavirus task force, coordinated by Oceana Wilson, Acting Dean of the College. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. We will continue to share information and updates on this unfolding situation.

Coronavirus Disease 2019

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 situation continues to evolve and we continue to use guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Health Association (VHA), to inform our preparation and response planning. At this time, the risk of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to the population at large is low (see and, as of March 2, 2020), Vermont reports no cases of coronavirus in the state. The College is prepared to implement the recommendations of the Vermont Department of Health in the event that a member of the campus community tests positive for coronavirus.

Influenza

Influenza, the flu, is active in our campus community, and we have confirmed cases present. The CDC indicates that flu activity is high and expected to continue for several weeks.

Campus Planning & Preparedness

If needed, places to wash hands and hand sanitizer are available on campus in the academic complex, the cafeteria, the dorms, the gym, as well as outdoor locations on campus. We encourage all community members to wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer stations have been added in the Commons Dining Hall and in Roz’s Cafe. We encourage all community members to take measures to protect themselves and prevent the spread of these viruses. Hand sanitizer stations have been added in the Commons Dining Hall and in Roz’s Cafe.

As you prepare for Long Weekend, business, or academic-related travel, please use the CDC travel recommendations to inform your plans and consider the need to travel against the potential risk to yourself and the Bennington College community. In many cases, the safest option may be to postpone your travel. Travel recommendations & Long Weekend Planning

Students Currently on Study Away/Exchange Programs

Academic Services staff are monitoring international travel warnings due to the coronavirus. In addition, students currently on Study Away or Exchange programs are in direct contact with Bennington students currently enrolled in Study Away or Exchange programs and are working with them individually based on their locations and the recommendations of their host institutions.

Prevention Measures

We encourage all community members to take measures to protect themselves and prevent the spread of these viruses. Hand sanitizer stations have been added in the Commons Dining Hall and in Roz’s Cafe. We encourage all community members to wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer stations have been added in the Commons Dining Hall and in Roz’s Cafe.

Both the influenza virus and the novel coronavirus have similar recommendations for prevention and protection:

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
• If soap and water are not readily available, use a alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Stay home from work, school, and public places when you are sick.
• Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
• If you have a fever or cough, stay home.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Additionally, it is recommended to get a flu shot if you have not already done so this season. Flu shots are available through healthcare providers and many local pharmacies. The closest place to campus to receive a flu shot is Hannaford’s Pharmacy.

Students

• If you have a fever and/or respiratory illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath, please contact Health Services. Health Services will conduct a screening and evaluation. Calling, rather than walking in, allows a clinician to screen on the phone for any risk factors, make appointments (if necessary) to review and confirm symptoms, and limit the spread of any illness.

• Please do not self-diagnose. If you have any concerns, please be in touch with Health Services.

• Please do not attend classes if you feel ill; classes should be absent from classes due to illness, and do not attend classes if you have a fever or cough.

Facility and staff

• If you develop a fever or respiratory-illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath, please stay home and contact your primary care provider and/or Vermont ExpressCare for screening and evaluation. Calling, rather than walking in, allows a clinician to screen on the phone for any risk factors, make appointments (if necessary) to review and confirm symptoms, and limit the spread of any illness.

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Bennington College

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Families,

The message below was sent to your student’s Bennington email address. We are sharing this message with you so that you also have information and the College’s planning around the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and influenza. We will continue to share ongoing updates, but if you have any questions, please contact our TrueRemove®. Acting Dean of the College and the head of the new coronavirus task force, coordinated by Oceana Wilson, Acting Dean of the College, will email the task force, along with the Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Health Association (VHA), to inform our preparation and response planning. At this time, the risk of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to the population at large is low (see and, as of March 2, 2020), Vermont reports no cases of coronavirus in the state. The College is prepared to implement the recommendations of the Vermont Department of Health in the event that a member of the campus community tests positive for coronavirus.

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Travel Recommendations & Long Weekend Planning

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