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 U.S., 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 contact her with your questions or concerns. We will continue to share information and updates via this channel.

**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 and Human Services (VTDHHS), along with the American College Health Association (ACHA), to inform our preparation and response planning. At this time, the risk of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) to the Bennington College community remains low and, as of March 3, 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.

**Influences**
Influences, in the flu, is active in our campus community, and we have confirmed cases present. The CDC indicates that high activity is expected to persist for at least several weeks.

**Campus Planning & Preparation**
If needed, places are in place to locate isolation and support, including academic accommodations and meals. Faculty and staff should be encouraged to have extra masks at home. The novel coronavirus task force, coordinated by Oceana Wilson. Acting Dean of the College, will monitor the situation and CDC recommendations as we continue to develop contingency plans for academic, student life, dining, facilities, and operations should there be a disruption to College-wide operations. Bennington College community members with questions or concerns are encouraged to email the task force.

**Travel Recommendations & Long Weekend Planning**
We recommend against travel to: China, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong. As you prepare for Long Weekend, business, or academic-related travel, please use the CDC travel recommendations to inform your plans and consider whether travel against the potential risk to yourself and the Bennington College community. In many cases, the safest option may be to postpone your travel.

**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/exchange programs should be in touch with their host institution or email the task force to inform our preparation and response planning.

**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. There are also mask dispensers on campus in some locations.

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, you can use an 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, or public areas if you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you don’t have a tissue, cough into your elbow. Do not use your hand.
- 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.

If you have a fever or respiratory illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath, please call 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 needed), share information, and limit the spread of any illness.

If you have a fever and/or respiratory illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath, please do not self-diagnose. If you have any concerns, please be in touch with Health Services. They will conduct a screening and evaluation. If needed, plans are in place to provide isolation and support, including academic accommodations and meals.

**Faculty 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 Express Care for screening and evaluation. If self-referral is necessary, and if self-referral is necessary, please call TrueRemove® at 1-844-378-0942.

**Students**
- If you develop 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 Express Care for screening and evaluation. If self-referral is necessary, and if self-referral is necessary, please call TrueRemove® at 1-844-378-0942.

- You should be in touch with the Provost’s Office if you need to stay home due to illness and have questions regarding your absence.

**Disnouth-Hitchcock in Lebanon, NH**
For Bennington College community members who have health care providers at Dartmouth-Hitchcock in Lebanon, NH, we are sharing the following announcement from the hospital.

**Message from the President**

Dear Families,

The message below was sent to your student's Bennington email address. We are sharing this message as we hope that you also have information and the College's planning around the travel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We will continue to share ongoing updates, but if you have any specific questions, please contact our office directly. Acting Dean of the College and the head of the new Coronavirus Task Force, 61 College Dr, Bennington, VT 05201-6004 US.

Best,

Isabel Roche
Interim President