

MARCH 11, 2020
EMAIL TO UNIVERSITY FACULTY/STAFF

Colleagues:

Over the last few weeks we have watched as the COVID-19 outbreak has come to a number of communities across the country and now, as expected, to the Middle Tennessee area. As we have anticipated this having a presence in our area, a leadership team of professionals from many disciplines has been meeting almost daily for weeks to monitor, manage and prepare for this moment. **To date, no confirmed cases related to COVID-19 have been reported on campus nor have significant risks been identified.** Following are several updates that I want to share with you.

Professional Development Day on Friday

As we look toward spring break next week, **we have decided to suspend classes for Friday, March 13, to give our community an opportunity to be better prepared for the possibility of operating in an online format should a circumstance arise where that is necessary.**

This also allows our students to start their spring break a day early THIS Friday, March 13. Dorms will close on Saturday morning as originally scheduled, but students will be able to begin their spring break a little early if they choose.

As such, **all faculty and staff are to report to campus as usual on Friday, March 13.** We are using this as an opportunity for professional training and employee preparedness on the latest tools to work remotely should that be a future circumstance. For example, we will use Friday as a professional development day on campus for faculty to become proficient in technology and alternative educational delivery methods for use now and in the future and for staff who have been identified as needing to work remotely for business continuity purposes.

Meetings for the Lipscomb Community

As we prepare for that day, there are three upcoming meetings that we are expecting your attendance at this week. Please adjust your schedules and join us for the following meetings as appropriate:

Thursday, March 12

Faculty Meeting • 11 a.m., George Shinn Center

Faculty are required to attend this meeting during which we will share more information about how we have been proactively planning for this situation, along with details of the actions we are taking and the protocols and plans that are in place, plus additional information.

Faculty/Staff Meeting • 2 p.m., George Shinn Center

Faculty and staff are invited to attend this meeting where we will share updates from the February board meeting along with other news and information.

Friday, March 13

Professional Development

As we prepare for alternative teaching opportunities now and in the future, faculty are asked to attend sessions taught by Lipscomb's Center for Teaching and Learning leadership on tools/software available to transition courses to a remote or online learning environment. Two meetings are planned. You will be receiving more detailed information about the time and schedule for these sessions from the Office of the Provost.

Staff who have been identified as those who may need to work remotely or who will be managing remote workers should the COVID-19 situation escalate will be contacted individually for training opportunities that will be available on Friday.

Spring Break Travel Reminders

I also want to remind you of the information that we have shared with you regarding preventive care, travel recommendations and helpful resources. We have developed a special resource page on the university website — lipscomb.edu/covid19 — that I encourage you to check often as a source of information. For the latest news and updates for the Lipscomb community [click here](#). We will post daily updates that may be helpful to you.

As you may recall, we have canceled university international spring break mission trips this year. As a reminder, as you are preparing to travel to various destinations during spring break, please note that all school-sponsored international travel is fully restricted until further notice to any country or area that meets **any** of the following criteria:

1. Has a rating by the CDC at a Level 2 or higher, or
2. Has a rating by the U.S. Department of State at a Level 3 or higher, or
3. Is restricting or banning travel.

Find more [here](#) about travel guidelines and other important related information. ***Per University policy and until further notice, any student or employee who independently visits a location that meets any of these criteria or who travels via a cruise to any location is restricted from campus for a 14-day isolation period.*** If this situation applies to you, you should inform your supervisor. Please note the inclusion in this list of any cruise travel.

General Sick Policy for COVID-19 Situation

Employees who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, those who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 and those who are told to self-isolate by following CDC guidelines or medical advice, will take paid sick leave for the duration of the illness or 14-day isolation period, whichever is longer. In such a case, the employee will be placed on sick leave even when earned sick leave has been depleted (it will be extended during this circumstance), and should coordinate with the Office of Human Resources regarding how to replenish such used but unearned sick days.

Policy Exception: Employees who violate the University's travel restrictions noted above and who require self-isolation upon return from such trip (whether for exhibiting

COVID-19 symptoms, being exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or recommended to self-isolate by following CDC guidelines or medical advice) may use earned sick leave and vacation time to cover any needed time off for such isolation. If any additional time is needed for this isolation period or illness recovery, the time will be taken as unpaid administrative leave.

High Risk Groups Request for Accommodations

For faculty and staff who have a documented medical need or who may fall in high risk categories per the CDC due to age or pre-existing health issues, such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, autoimmune disease, and would like to request workplace accommodations, please notify your supervisor and contact **Lynn Chappin** in the Office of Human Resources at lynn.chappin@lipscomb.edu. Students should contact **Leslie Beach** in the Office of ACCESSability at leslie.beach@lipscomb.edu. You can review the CDC guidance for high risk groups and special populations at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/index.html>. Once approved by human resources, employees in these categories will receive instructions for accommodations such as remote working and how to report time to continue compensation without interruption.

The Lipscomb Response to COVID-19

Over the last few days, some institutions in Nashville and across the country are altering schedules and changing educational delivery formats. Every institution has its own community with its own unique circumstances and considerations and it is incumbent for each institution to make decisions that are in the best interest of and in the context for that organization. As you evaluate the actions and decisions that we are making in the management of this situation, I assure you that we are moving forward in an assertive way to manage the health risk and to manage the educational process.

For several weeks, many of your colleagues have gathered to monitor, contemplate and plan for the emergence of COVID-19 in our area or region. This interdisciplinary group includes members of the executive leadership team and colleagues from health science, student life, risk management, communications, medical center, service operations, academics, finance and the Academy. Here are just a few of the areas this team has focused on in the last few days:

- Meeting frequently and now daily are members of the executive leadership team plus representatives from health sciences, risk management, communication and student life.
- Thoroughly disinfecting on a daily basis the high-touch, high-traffic areas using state-of-the-art disinfecting equipment.
- Replenishing supplies of both medical items and cleaning essentials to ensure we have the necessary items needed and that they are readily available.
- Increasing in-clinic medical staff training and adding resources to better serve our students, such as a triage nurse phone line.
- Communicating to employees and students regarding the situation and updates about University policies and procedures.

- Creating the COVID-19 website — lipscomb.edu/covid19 — to provide necessary information to employees, students and parents.
- Creating detailed phases of a response plan that increases our activities as the virus situation escalates around us — plans that no one hopes we ever have to use.

These dedicated employees have represented you well in this unique and somewhat exhausting situation and I am extremely grateful for their energy, expertise and professionalism exhibited in this process.

While we never know how a school year will unfold and this moment feels overwhelming at times, we know for certain that God is in control and that through your work at Lipscomb University every single day you are transforming the lives of others.

Blessings,
Randy