March 9, 2020 - Email Broadcast

Dear Centre Parents and Families,

As you have undoubtedly seen, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has now reached Kentucky, with the first case reported this past Friday, March 6, in Harrison County, north of Lexington. Over the weekend, three more cases were reported: another in Harrison County, as well as one each in Jefferson and Fayette counties, which include the large cities of Louisville and Lexington. We must assume that these numbers will continue to increase across the Commonwealth in the coming days and weeks.

Early on, in part given our several study abroad trips during CentreTerm in January and because of our small international student population, Centre College was thinking ahead to prepare for how COVID-19 might impact our campus community. Our efforts proved prescient when the Kentucky Department for Public Health recommended on Saturday, February 8, that we isolate all those students who had traveled to the United States from China on their way home from the break between CentreTerm and spring semester, January 28 to February 4.

It is very important to note that no one presented any symptoms, and all returned to normal activity after a 14-day period of isolation, which began based on each individual’s date of return to the United States.

In short, we acted simply out of an abundance of caution. We continue to do so, believing that taking all preventative measures and strengthening our preparedness are the best current antidotes.

To that end, on Friday, February 28, I formalized our efforts by convening a Coronavirus Task Force, whose 30 members gathered the following Tuesday, March 3. Since then, separate teams have been meeting to plan for all the kinds of contingencies you might imagine. As they say, we are planning for the worst, all while hoping for the best.

The kinds of questions currently on our minds involve whether, in the extreme, we may need to curtail public events or teach classes online; as well, we are considering how we can best accommodate faculty and staff who need to stay or work from home if they are or feel sick, or if they need to care for a family member or loved one who is ill.

While this rapidly developing virus requires above all that we remain informed and nimble in our ability to respond, equal parts of care and compassion – hallmarks of the Centre community – are also important. I assure you that we are firing on all these cylinders.

As Spring Break approaches March 21-29, we do ask everyone to consider carefully their travel plans and general activity. In case anyone contracts the virus, God forbid, or is in contact with
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As Spring Break approaches March 21-29, we do ask everyone to consider carefully their travel plans and general activity. In case anyone contracts the virus, God forbid, or is in contact with anyone or in a community where COVID-19 presents itself, we ask that people also keep close track of their activities while away from campus.

In the meantime, I urge calm and commonsense measures.

Please feel free to contact my office with your questions and concerns. You may also visit our Coronavirus Information Center webpage (available HERE), which is being updated frequently.

My best,

John A. Roush
President