Background

The UWRF Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated by senior leadership in January 2020 in response to the coronavirus outbreak in China, and was subsequently charged with three high-level objectives: 1) monitor the impact of the coronavirus nationally, regionally and locally; 2) prevent the virus from having an impact on UWRF; and 3) develop a communications plan for campus, including talking points for both inward and outward audiences. Over the course of six months, the EOC progressed from level 1 activation to level 3 and back to level 2 in response to the rapidly changing environment, while completing the established objectives. Now that the imminent threat of the emergency is over and campus is preparing for a “new normal”, it is recommended that the EOC scale back to operations under the Emergency Management Team (EMT) and a new team be established to oversee the transition from emergency response to normal campus operations.

EOC Deactivation Plan

Deactivation of the EOC does not mean the coronavirus is no longer a public health threat. However, with the release of the UWRF Return to Campus Plan (May 2020) and UWRF Fall 2020 Decisions Task Force recommendations (July 2020), the campus has a set of blueprints to ensure the continuity of operations under new guidelines until a vaccine for the virus is available. To oversee the completion of the Return to Campus guidelines and Fall 2020 Decisions Task Force recommendations, the EOC recommends an implementation team be established. The implementation team would be responsible for developing specific action items and timelines needed to complete preparations for the 2020-21 academic year and should have a structure that promotes cross-unit collaboration and decision-making authority. A strong network of campus communicators should also be involved to ensure clear communication and to provide informed and timely responses to questions from both internal and external constituent groups.

The EOC recommends a closing date of July 17, 2020. The EMT will continue to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis and will be prepared to reactivate the EOC at any time if requested by senior leadership.