FAQ | Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
Jan. 29, 2020

Are there travel warnings in place due to the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak? The U.S. Department of State has raised China to a Level 3 Travel Warning and Hubei Province has been raised to a Level 4 Travel Warning. As a result, no travel to Hubei Province is allowed for faculty, staff, and students engaged in university business. For professional travel to other parts of China, the U.S. Department of State and Center for Disease Control are asking that travelers reconsider/avoid all non-essential travel to the country. University policy restricts travel to countries designated as Levels 3 and 4. If you have questions about university-related travel to China, email Heidi Soneson, Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Education, at heidi.soneson@uwrf.edu

What is Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?
Coronaviruses are a virus group that can infect and spread between humans through close personal contact, coughing/sneezing, and touching surfaces with coronavirus on them and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. Coronaviruses circulate regularly and cause cold and flu-like illnesses every year. These illnesses usually last for a short amount of time. Sometimes new strains can become more widespread.

Is there a threat to campus?
There are no suspected or reported cases of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) on the UW-River Falls campus or in the River Falls community. We are not aware, at this time, of any UW-River Falls personnel or students who have been exposed to the virus.

What is the university doing?
In coordination with UW System, UW-River Falls has activated its Emergency Management Team to monitor and address the situation. We are continuously monitoring the situation and taking steps as directed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local, state and regional public health officials.

What should I do?
As this virus presents much like influenza with coughing, sneezing and similar flu symptoms, messaging to students and employees will focus on preventive wellness efforts everyone can take to avoid this and other viruses. These include covering your cough, washing your hands, staying home if you are sick, etc. UWRF will communicate with the campus community directly if there is a need to take additional action. Influenza remains the most serious public health concern for members of the UW-River Falls community which is why we continue to recommend preventive wellness efforts.

• Students - If you have influenza-like symptoms, contact your primary care provider or Vibrant Health Family Clinics in River Falls. Share any recent travel history or possible exposure. Certain clinical health services such as basic office visits are covered by Student Health Services for current UWRF students. Students should call ahead for an appointment at 715-425-6701. The River Falls Taxi (715-425-7878) is available for transportation to appointments at no charge.

• Employees - If you do have influenza-like symptoms, be sure to contact your primary care provider and be sure to share any recent travel history or possible exposure.
If a campus community member becomes infected, what will happen?
If a local case is reported, UWRF will take immediate steps to properly respond to any health and safety risk to the campus community. If it becomes necessary to implement any action, UWRF will follow all recommendations from the CDC and Department of Health.

If someone calls and reports recent travel or known exposure and symptoms/illness, what protocol/advice is provided?
If a campus community member is, or becomes, symptomatic and has recently traveled through a major transportation hub, they should contact their primary care provider.

What information can or will the university share regarding any students or employees who have recently traveled to or from Wuhan?
The university will not release any names or residential information regarding any student or employee in order to comply with state or federal privacy laws.

Will classes be held as scheduled?
Yes. Classes will be held as scheduled. There is no immediate plan to cancel classes or any other university event or activity. All students are expected to attend scheduled classes.

What if a student is concerned about attending class?
If you have concerns and would like to discuss alternatives to attending class or completing academic work in the immediate future, please reach out to your professor or the department chair.

If a faculty member has questions or concerns regarding coming to work, what should they do?
Contact their respective Dean’s Office. All faculty and staff are expected to come to work as scheduled.

Where do I look for additional information?
For information about the Coronavirus, please visit the CDC website at cdc.gov.

Who else can I speak with about this?
Answers to questions related to the coronavirus can be found at CDC.gov. Clarifying questions can be directed to Student Health and Counseling at 715-425-3293.

If I feel as though I am being treated unfairly, discriminated against, or harassed due to concerns around this issue, what should I do?
You may file a report with the Bias Incident Team.

What do I do if a member of the media calls?
Media inquiries should be directed to the UWRF Public Information Officer at 715-425-4306.