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Dear University of Alaska Community,

As spring break approaches, I want to provide an update on the university's response to the novel coronavirus situation and to share additional guidance on international travel.

There are currently no confirmed or suspected cases in Alaska. However, the number of cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, continues to increase worldwide.

In light of that, I have activated our statewide incident management team and executive crisis management team. While the risk to our universities' populations is still low, these teams will work with each of our universities to ensure we have consistent plans in place to support our students and employees, in the event the risk changes. As those plans are developed, we will share more about them on our UA coronavirus website at alaska.edu/coronavirus19.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge that many people in our university community and state are concerned about this situation. Being concerned is understandable, and it's all the more reason to treat each other with compassion, respect, and openness. As we interact with one another, please avoid falling into the trap of suspicion and fear. Viruses don't discriminate based on ancestry. We need to stand together as a community to keep everyone healthy.

On the travel front, we continue to monitor travel advisories from the Centers for Disease Control. Today the CDC updated its guidance to travelers. Because of those and other recent changes, I am updating our temporary travel procedures. Effective today, travel to the following countries at university expense is prohibited:

- China
- Iran
- Italy
- South Korea
- Japan
- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Taiwan

These countries are on the CDC's "Watch," "Alert" or "Warning" levels, or are listed as posing risk of community spread. Because these lists change frequently, I have asked the chancellors to ensure that, going forward, travel to any location on these CDC lists be restricted.

While this guidance deals with university-sponsored travel, I want to encourage all University of Alaska employees and students to follow the guidance of the CDC regarding travel and prevention precautions. Many people travel during spring break. Before you go, please be sure to check the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>) to see whether your destination is included in a watch list. The situation evolves daily and following the CDC guidance can both help protect your health and avoid a situation where you cannot easily return home due to emerging international travel restrictions.

If you do plan to travel to an area with active COVID-19 cases, please consider informing the university. We have set up a [secure online form](#) for students and employees to use to let us know if they have traveled to a region with active cases or think they may have been exposed some other way. There are options for distance delivery of coursework for students and telework or leave for employees, if you choose to stay home and self-quarantine. If you are feeling sick, or were in contact with someone who is sick and begin to experience symptoms, CDC guidance is to stay at home, call your health care provider and make sure to mention your recent travel. The CDC is providing information for the public about this situation on their website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Safe travels,
Jim Johnsen