



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

INTERNAL COMMUNIQUÉ

March 11, 2020

Campus COVID-19 Update

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past two weeks you received email updates from Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Hilary Beckles including the establishment of a [Task Force](#) to assist with the mobilisation of the region's public health providers to deal with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Two Vice-Chancellor Forums were hosted subsequently on **Demystifying the Coronavirus** and **COVID-19 Partnering in the Caribbean's Response**.

Yesterday, March 10, [Jamaica confirmed its first imported case of COVID-19 in Kingston](#). To date, there have been **no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Trinidad and Tobago**. On a Campus level, we continue to be closely guided by the work of the Task Force and our Ministry of Health. The health, wellness and safety of all students and staff remains the priority.

I write, therefore, to provide an update on the plans that are underway:

Activation of the Incident Management Team

The Campus **Incident Management Team (IMT)** has been activated and we have developed a COVID-19 Response Plan for the Campus. The IMT has managed the impacts of the natural disasters that affected the Campus like earthquakes and flooding in the recent past. The plan addresses the campus response in three stages:

- Prior to any cases being reported in Trinidad and Tobago (our immediate actions)
- Confirmed cases reported in Trinidad and Tobago
- Confirmed cases reported on our Campus

At each stage, several actions are outlined, with consideration given to any guidance from the Task Force and the Ministry of Health. It takes into account a number of contingencies across several functional areas, inclusive of business continuity for IT, research, facilities support, safety and security, and other essential services.

Travel Advisory

On a regional level, The UWI is seeking to intensify its commitment to the regional and global strategy in respect of COVID-19, and reaffirms its dedication to keeping safe its students, staff and guests.

In addition to the cost containment policy currently in operation that targets travel as a significant item by limiting access to mission critical activity, the Vice-Chancellor has mandated a further restriction on travel to only the **most essential matters**, as part of the regional public health and institutional responsibility programme.

A further update, respective to operations at the St. Augustine Campus, will be circulated in due course.

Important Reminders

Following published advice from several Public Health Agencies, including Ministry of Health, I want to remind you of the following prevention tips previously shared:

1. Clean hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand rubs to reduce your risk
2. Clean your work areas with disinfectants regularly (desks etc.)
3. Keep yourself informed from reliable sources and avoid the spread of false information. (Reliable sources include The UWI, CARPHA, WHO, Ministries of Health).
4. Avoid travelling if you have a fever and cough; seek medical attention if required.
5. Manage your coughs and sneezes. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue. Dispose of tissues immediately and clean your hands.
6. The elderly or persons with cardiovascular disease, diabetes or respiratory conditions should avoid crowded places.
7. If you have fevers and are coughing or sneezing, seek medical attention and stay at home.
8. If you are sick and are at home, sleep separately from other family members, use different cutlery and utensils.
9. If you develop shortness of breath, seek medical attention immediately.

Furthermore, the University is dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus community where all individuals feel safe, respected, and valued. In this regard, acts of bias or discrimination stemming from the association of COVID-19 with a particular population, ethnicity or nationality will not be tolerated.

Look out for future updates as this situation evolves and should you have any questions and comments, please communicate with Mr. Rajesh Kandhai, Manager - Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment (OSHE) Unit.

I thank you, in advance, for your support.

Professor Brian Copeland

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Principal