Dear Colleagues:

Due to the rapidly evolving news and times of uncertainty due to COVID-19, we are launching this Academic Affairs Communiqué to address questions being asked by faculty and others in our campus community.

1. While we are receiving frequent updates from the chancellor regarding the coronavirus, I think it would be helpful to have a list of frequently asked questions for faculty. Is this possible, and if so, to whom should I send my questions?
   
   Yes! This is an excellent idea, which is why we are starting this Academic Affairs Communiqué. At this time, please email your questions to Marie Mora at Marie.Mora@umsl.edu or Beth Eckelkamp at beckelkamp@umsl.edu. We are also looking into having an online form to submit questions.

2. We are receiving frequent updates, but is there one place I can go to find the latest news instead of having to track down them down in my email?
   
   Yes! The UMSL 2019 Novel Coronavirus Updates webpage is a “one stop shop” and includes all of these updates as well as a list of frequently asked questions. It also includes direct links to the Keep Teaching (for Faculty) and Keep Learning (for Students) websites, where you can find the latest updates from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

3. Does UMSL’s travel suspension only apply to airline travel?
   
   No. At this time, UMSL has suspended all non-essential university-related travel until May 18, regardless of the mode of transportation. Requests to engage in essential university-related travel must be submitted at the dean, vice chancellor or Vice Provost level for review by the Office of the Provost in consultation with Human Resources.

4. May I book university-related travel now for events scheduled for after May 18?
   
   Yes. However, while UMSL has suspended all non-essential university-related travel until May 18, faculty, staff, and students should be aware that the May 18 date is subject to change.
5. **What is UMSL going to do about the Spring 2020 commencements?**

UMSL officials are actively monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak and its effect on the university community. UMSL’s Commencement Committee (co-chaired by Curt Coonrod and Marie Mora) submitted recommendations to the interim chancellor on Wednesday March 18. She will discuss these options with President Choi in the very near future.

6. **I realize that campus will be closing and people are expected to work remotely. However, as a faculty member, I often come to my office to work on research on weekends and evenings. Will I still be able to do so?**

No. Starting March 23, essentially 100% of UMSL’s faculty and staff will be working remotely and not permitted on campus. Faculty and staff who will be permitted to work on campus will need to be approved by the interim chancellor. Please contact your dean for more details.

7. **With UMSL’s physical operations closing, how can we assist students who may need Social Services support for basic needs insecurity?**

UMSL has Social Workers on staff to assist students with basic needs insecurity and to connect students to resources they might need outside of academic support. Please refer them to the Student Social Services webpage at [https://www.umsl.edu/studentsocialservices/](https://www.umsl.edu/studentsocialservices/) and suggest that they select the appropriate option from choices on the right hand side of the page.

8. **How can we assist students who are sharing concerns over their health and wellness?**

The Health and Counseling Services Office in the MSC will maintain limited operations to assist students as needed. Students should call 314-516-5711 to schedule an appointment.

9. **With UMSL’s physical operations closing are academic advising, academic coaching and tutoring still available?**

All student support services are being provided remotely, including online tutoring. The contact information for Student Support Services is available on the UMSL [2019 Novel Coronavirus Updates](https://www.umsl.edu/2019novelcoronavirusupdates/) webpage under “Additional Resources” at the end of the FAQ section.
Know that the work you are doing to continue to transform lives even during these challenging times is greatly appreciated. Please stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely yours,

Marie T. Mora, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and
Beth Eckelkamp, Associate Provost for Student Success

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