



September 8, 2009

Dear UWRF Faculty and Staff,

The H1N1 virus, commonly known as swine flu virus, could infect between 30 percent and 50 percent of the American population during the fall and winter and lead to as many as 1.8 million U.S. hospital admissions, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology reported. With this in mind The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are encouraging institutions of higher education to make preparations for an outbreak of the H1N1 Virus during the fall and spring semesters. Among the actions recommended by the CDC are:

1. Review, and revise if needed, sick leave policies to remove barriers to faculty and staff staying home when they are ill or caring for an ill family member.
2. For students, consider altering policies on missed classes and examinations and late assignments so that students' academic concerns do not prevent them from staying home when ill or prompt them to return to class or take examinations while still symptomatic and potentially infectious
3. Do not require a doctor's note for students, faculty, or staff to validate their illness or to return to work, as doctor's offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
4. Distance learning or web-based learning may help students maintain self-isolation.

I am writing to ask your assistance in positioning our campus to meet the above recommendations. The first step is to review, and if necessary, consider revising your attendance policies to reflect the reality that one-third to one-half of your students and your colleagues (possibly including yourself) will need to stay off-campus or in isolation on-campus for a period of 7-10 days. While recognizing that nearly all students who will inform their instructors that they are missing class due to an extended illness will be truthful, reports of illness that are discovered to be false will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures.

The second step I am asking you to take is to assess the degree to which you are prepared to deliver your curriculum by means other than face-to-face instruction. Alternative methods of instruction may become necessary due to a large number of student absences, as well as your need to stay off campus to care for yourself or a family member. The Division of Technology Services will schedule and facilitate additional workshops on the use of Desire2Learn (D2L). Additionally I, along with shared governance leaders, am asking the Instructional Learning Technology Committee (ILTC) and the Division of Technology Services to conduct a campus-wide assessment of technology based instructional methods currently in use by faculty and instructional academic staff. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that we are capable of supporting alternative means of instruction with a reduced number of healthy staff in the Division of Technology Services.

I encourage you to visit UWRF's Emergency Preparedness web site (<http://www.uwrf.edu/emergency>) for the latest guidance on preparing for the upcoming flu season.

Thank you,

Fernando Delgado, Ph.D.
Provost