

TO: Faculty, Staff and Administrators
FROM: Dr. Ruth A. Dyer, Interim Provost
DATE: August 31, 2009
RE: University Contingency Planning for H1N1 virus

Based on information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), we are likely to experience an increase in cases of the H1N1 virus in the coming academic year. We already have confirmed cases of the illness on our campus. This memo is intended to brief administrators, faculty, and staff on the information programs, contingency plans, and strategies we are implementing to prepare for and deal with the potential impact of the H1N1 virus.

Our overall goal is to implement strategies that limit the number of people who become seriously ill from influenza, while also minimizing disruptions to the educational process and social aspects of the university. Our approach is both broad and deep in order to inform every person in the K-State family about what he or she can do to combat the spread of this virus.

The Office of Environmental Health & Safety and Lafene Health Center have implemented a public awareness campaign, including website information, posters, flyers, and public service announcements. This campaign focuses on what students, faculty, or staff members should do if they contract H1N1 flu-like symptoms, as well as strategies for preventing the spread of the virus. There is a link on the K-State homepage for information on the H1N1 virus (<http://www.k-state.edu/lafene/h1n1flu.htm>).

Ill students should contact Lafene for medical advice and the Office of Student Life for school-related issues. These two units will keep in daily contact with students who report H1N1 flu-like symptoms. Student Life will maintain a list of students ill with the virus and communicate those names to assistant deans in the colleges, who will then share this information with faculty.

Academic departments should prepare a contingency plan in case faculty and staff members contract the flu (e.g., who will cover classes and be present in the departmental offices in cases of reported illness). Faculty and staff members should contact the Human Resources staff member in their department to report their illness.

Faculty members should read the guidelines for contingency planning listed below. The guidelines provide suggestions and strategies for communicating with and assisting students who are ill, especially the relaxing of expectations for doctors' notes from students who miss classes because of the H1N1 virus. The guidelines also provide ideas on using technology to assist with the learning process in the event of students or faculty missing classes.

I appreciate everyone's assistance and cooperation with this matter, as it has the potential to become a significant public-health crisis in the coming year. Through our planning and actions, we can minimize the impact of the H1N1 flu virus on members of our K-State family and on all of our operations. We will all need to work together to maintain a healthy and safe environment.

With grateful acknowledgment to the University of Maine and the CDC.

Contingency Planning for H1N1 Influenza

Guidelines for Instructors

August 2009

Because of the very real threat of the H1N1 influenza virus for the coming fall and winter seasons, we must be prepared for possible disruptions in our courses due to illness among students and instructors. Our overall goal is to implement strategies that limit the number of people who become seriously ill from influenza, while also minimizing disruptions to the educational process and social aspects of the university. The preparations involve considerations at the department level and at the class level.

Departments should prepare contingency plans that identify potential ways to assist or replace instructors who contract the virus. This might involve listing those who could substitute for each faculty member in the case of a health emergency, or developing online facilities for the class to operate using a distance model for a period of time. Instructors who develop H1N1 flu-like symptoms are advised to stay home and contact their departmental Human Resource specialist to report their illness.

At the class level, each instructor should think creatively of ways to complete the semester in the face of potentially adverse circumstances. This could involve the preparation of course materials online, if possible. In addition to facilitating the distribution of course materials and teaching contingency plans, each instructor is encouraged to assist the university in our efforts to minimize the spread of H1N1. The following suggestions and guidelines are intended to help mitigate the negative impact of the virus on the academic mission of the university.

Guidelines and Suggestions for Instructors

- Take time early in the semester to remind students about good hygiene practices and what to do if they contract flu-like symptoms. Most prominent issues to cover include frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and self-isolation.
- It is recommended that ill students call Lafene Health Center to report their illness and receive medical advice. Ill students should contact the Office of Student Life for class concerns or school-related issues. Distance students who become ill with the virus should contact their instructors. Ill students with disabilities who might require additional assistance should contact Disability Support Services. Other points of contact for ill students would include advisors, friends, the Office of Greek Affairs (for fraternities and sororities) or Housing and Dining (for students in the dorms).

- Faculty should consider altering policies on missed classes, 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.
- Faculty should consider suspending course policies that require a doctor's note to validate a student's illness. Access to Lafene Health Center, local doctor's offices and/or medical facilities may be limited, making it difficult for ill students to obtain a note from a doctor in a timely fashion. The Office of Student Life and Lafene Student Health Center are working with Greek Affairs and Housing and Dining to track students who report H1N1 flu-like symptoms.
 - o The Office of Student Life will maintain a list of students who have reported contracting the virus. Each college will receive updates from the Office of Student Life with the list of students who have H1N1 flu-like symptoms. Instructors will then receive official notice of students' absence through the Dean's office in their respective colleges.
- Consider using distance learning or web-based technologies to facilitate student learning in order to allow ill students to maintain self-isolation. The appendix below offers numerous options for instructors for information sharing, lecturing, facilitating exams, collecting assignments and homework, and other instructional activities.
- You may consider the following announcement in your classes: In the event of disruption of normal classroom activities due to an incidence of H1N1 flu, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In that event, I will provide an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede the original syllabus.

The plan itself need not be communicated to the students unless its implementation is deemed necessary by the instructor.

APPENDIX

USING INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR CLASSROOM CONTINGENCY PLANNING

There are a variety of technologies available for use by instructors to maintain the continuity of a class in the event of an emergency, including K-State Online, iSIS, e-mailing, online conferencing and chats, podcasts (e.g., recording lectures for remote viewing), and KSU Libraries online resources. The particular mix of components would depend on the nature of the instructor's course and the instructor's experience with, and interest in, these technologies.

Instructors who are inexperienced in distance-learning technologies available at K-State should either seek assistance from colleagues in their departments or contact the Information Technology Assistance Center (iTAC). The iTAC staff members can provide assistance with the tools for teaching (such as K-State Online or audio/video needs) as well as instructional design services to help plan for changes to your course materials. Faculty can contact iTAC at 532-7722 or helpdesk@k-state.edu.

For those instructors who are more familiar with available technologies, there is a document outlining suggestions for alternate ways to conduct courses on the iTAC Help Desk home page located at <http://www.k-state.edu/infotech/helpdesk>.

When considering the use of technology as part of a contingency plan, it is important to address both instructional matters (e.g., how to provide information and resources to students, communicate/conference with students, collect student work) and assessment-related matters (e.g.,

how will exams be administered in place of in-class exams that were previously planned, or how will grading be modified in light of changed requirements). Instructors might also find it helpful to not only describe how information will be shared with students in the event of an emergency, but to also provide a brief demonstration of technologies that could be used or a sample low-risk assessment using technology.

Some courses will lend themselves to a conversion to distance format more easily than other courses. For example, courses delivered entirely or partly online will be easier to modify than entirely face-to-face courses. Also, courses involving mainly lectures or seminars will be easier to modify than labs and more performance-based courses (e.g., studio art, theater/dance, music performance).

The following are some distance learning options available for developing a contingency plan. It is a good idea to think about how each category might be applied to one's course.

Alternative information sharing:

- Post course documents to K-State Online.
- Place important messages in text, audio or video on the course home page for students to see immediately using the Announcement tool or other features in K-State Online.
- Email students by section or across all sections using the roster available in K-State Online.

Alternative lecture options:

- Post lecture notes and/or study guides to K-State Online in PowerPoint, Word or PDF format.
- Use assigned readings in lieu of lectures (KSU Libraries e-Reserves are recommended. If this is an option of choice, the list of materials should be submitted to the library ASAP so it will be ready when needed. Subject to e-Reserve limitations).
- Create podcasts or other audio/video lecture formats using K-State Online.

Alternative homework submission options:

- Use the File Dropbox feature in K-State Online for homework submission (students cannot see other students' work).
- Develop online homework questions using the Assessment tools in K-State Online.
- Consider having students email attachments if this is manageable.

- Provide students with an office mailing address for work that needs to be sent via US Postal Service.

Examinations:

- Post and collect take-home exams via K-State Online or allow students to submit completed exams using other online options such as email attachments.
- Use the K-State Online Assessment tool feature to develop online quizzes and exams.
- Provide students with an office mailing address for work that needs to be sent via US Postal Service.

Alternative discussion session options:

- For online discussion forums, use K-State Online Wimba Classroom (live, virtual classroom environment that includes multi-way live audio for students and instructors using voice-over IP, follow-the-speaker video application, desktop and file sharing, whiteboard and text chat).
- Use an email listserv for discussions or use the live K-State Online text chat sessions during regular class times (Multiple smaller chat rooms are possible).
- Use the Message Board feature in K-State Online for asynchronous discussions (for example posting a Question of the Day and requiring responses, seeding discussion questions and letting students post comments).

Hold distance office hours:

- Use K-State Online Wimba Classroom
- Use K-State Online chat room
- By phone
- By email
- Use Skype or other Internet communication systems

Alternative grading considerations:

- Consider modifying some of the ways points are assigned. If attendance is a requirement and there are associated points with attendance or in-class participation, consider alternatives such as submitting written responses to a question. If points are earned based on in-class presentations or reports or visits to off-campus sites, consider accepting video presentations or written reports as alternatives.

