

March 6, 2020

Dear SLC Community,

As the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) changes daily and confirmed cases in our area rise, the College is taking necessary precautions and preparing and planning for what is a very fluid situation.

These are extraordinary times and together we will continue to act thoughtfully, carefully, and in keeping with the best medical guidance available to protect the Sarah Lawrence community. The collective welfare of the College will continue to be a foremost priority in the months ahead. At this time there are no instances of COVID-19 on campus or at our global education sites, but there are several cases in broader Westchester County. The College's Health and Wellness Center leadership team participates in regular communications with the New York State Department of Health as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and continues to actively monitor developments and provide medical guidance.

Yesterday, in accordance with the CDC's interim guidance for institutions of higher education to plan, prepare, and respond to COVID-19, the College assembled its emergency management team to discuss and prepare for a range of response scenarios. Mary Hartnett, RN, Director of Medical Services in the College's Health & Wellness Center, collaborating closely with Jim Verdicchio, Director of Campus Safety, coordinated this cross-departmental meeting, bringing together expertise and insight from no fewer than 30 administrators and staff from the following areas: Provost & Dean of Faculty, Student Affairs, Dean of Studies, Human Resources, Health & Wellness, Admissions, AVI Fresh (dining services), Campus Security, Communications, Facilities, Finance & Operations, Global Education, and Information Technology. Our efforts were informed by the latest guidance from federal, state, and local health and education authorities, and insights shared by colleagues at colleges and universities in Westchester and New York City.

Preparation for possible scenarios regarding potential actions that may need to be taken with regard to college operations, classes, events, travel, and other scenarios is underway, and the community will be kept apprised as situations unfold. The frequency of communications will echo developments in Westchester county, and, as pertinent, changes in the international state of play that may affect members of our community studying abroad. As guidance from local, state, and federal officials is updated and/or changes, the College will be in direct and frequent contact to ensure all members of our community are well-informed and well-prepared.

Communications will always be sent via e-mail, and may on occasion be sent via our Rave Mobile Safety notification system. Rave alerts may be received via text, e-mail, phone, or all of these options. If you do not presently receive Rave alerts, please [follow these instructions to sign up](#). Parents and families are welcome to opt into this system.

A website – [SARAHLAWRENCE.EDU/COVID](https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/covid) – has been established as a repository of information regarding COVID-19 and the College's preparation and response, archived communications, and external resources. Please bookmark this page for easy access.

As the news cycle around COVID-19 churns, anxieties are not surprisingly on the rise. It is of utmost importance that we remain accurately informed; that we take steps to protect ourselves and those around us; and that we remain mindful of and sensitive to others who may be at greater risk. This is

also the time to remember and practice our principles of mutual respect—xenophobia has no place on the Sarah Lawrence campus or anywhere else. COVID-19 has global implications that may affect individuals and populations differently and it is paramount we recognize the additional implications its spread has for members of our community who have family and friends in China and/or in other areas of high infection, to be aware and to combat prejudice individuals have and are experiencing locally and globally, and to be aware that some may fear reactions they may encounter if they choose to wear a mask. While the College, at this time, has remained insulated from COVID-19, this rapidly-changing situation is one to be taken seriously and with the respect and care a Sarah Lawrence education imparts.

At this time, the best thing everyone can do is be vigilant about personal and communal hygiene. Please remember that you can reduce the risk of infection and help keep our community healthy by:

- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Using hand sanitizer frequently
- Coughing and sneezing into your arm (or tissue) rather than your hands (use cough etiquette)
- Disposing of tissues immediately after use
- Cleaning hard surfaces and frequently touched objects with disinfectants
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home (out of class and work/social events/dining halls) when you are sick

Finally, the Health & Wellness Center is available to answer any questions or concerns students may have.

Yours,

Tom Blum
Vice President for Administration
COVID-19 Response Team Lead