

March 9, 2020

Dear SLC community,

As this fluid situation develops and information and guidance rapidly change, Sarah Lawrence's response to COVID-19 will continue to be guided by medical experts and rooted in facts and information. Being informed and practicing personal hygiene are our community's best response mechanisms.

We have arranged for a webinar on Tuesday, 3/10, at 1:30 p.m. for students, faculty, and staff to engage and ask questions with Director of Medical Services Mary Hartnett; Dean of Studies Danny Trujillo; Provost Kanwal Singh; and, myself, Vice President for Administration Tom Blum.

Information to call in and/or join via web will be posted tomorrow (Tuesday) morning in the Announcements section on MySLC. To submit a question in advance of the webinar, visit the [Ask a Question section](#) of our COVID-19 information site.

There is also a regularly scheduled "Ask a Nurse" event in Bates on Wednesday, March 11, from 5-7:30 p.m.

Our Campus

At this moment, there are no cases of COVID-19 on campus. However, one non-student member of our community notified us this weekend of a *possible* exposure to the coronavirus through an off-campus interaction. This individual, who does not live on campus and whose exposure to campus has been very limited (in terms of both time and people), remains asymptomatic and has self-quarantined at home. All members of the individual's family are also asymptomatic and we expect this individual to complete self-quarantine this week. The Westchester County Department of Health considers this case to be very low risk. The College will continue to communicate pertinent information about this case should the situation change in any way.

New York State Update

Over the weekend, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency in order to speed the release of funds available for COVID-19 containment and mitigation. This action is a reflection of the focused work of Governor Cuomo and the New York Department of Health in confronting the virus and stopping its spread.

As a residential campus, Sarah Lawrence cannot simply close, and we recognize that many in our community may need to—or plan to—remain on campus during spring break. With that in mind, and to protect the community as much as is possible, the College is discouraging large group events moving forward and will reschedule events with anticipated attendance greater than 100 people for a later date.

Following recommendations from Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Health, all students, faculty, and staff are also asked to not attend large scale off-campus meetings, conferences, and similar events on behalf of Sarah

Lawrence. We also encourage the same practice for personal events.

Academics

Under the guidance of the Provost's office, faculty are working steadfastly to take precautions in their classrooms—avoiding close contact in theatre and dance classes, for example. The College is also working with faculty so that everyone understands remote learning and teaching options. Right now classes are continuing as usual, but this is a fluid and rapidly-changing situation and there may come a time when temporary cancellation of classes or remote and e-learning becomes necessary.

Campus Operations

SLC's director of medical services, Mary Hartnett, is in direct contact with Westchester County and New York State health authorities, who have all recommended the College continue with its regular operations and classes at this time.

Out of an abundance of caution and to assuage anxieties, the College has increased its cleaning frequency, and will continue to act vigilantly to ensure the safety and health of the community.

In addition, those on campus may see Health and Wellness and Campus Safety officials occasionally wear equipment like masks, gloves, and goggles if a situation warrants personal protective equipment. Again, this is out of an abundance of caution and following the recommendations of local and state health authorities as well as the medical expertise of the College's director of medical services. This is not a cause for alarm, but a reflection of how seriously every member of this campus is taking the threat of COVID-19.

Travel Policy and Protocol

As a reminder, the College's [travel policies](#) have been updated and any student, faculty, and/or staff who travels to a [State Department designated Level 3 or 4 region](#) *may not* return directly to campus; they *must* first complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine at home.

To reiterate information conveyed above, we are asking faculty and staff not to attend large off-campus work-related meetings, conferences, and other large events.

Study Abroad

The College is actively monitoring international developments and working with its study abroad partners to ensure the safety of students in SLC programs as well as those in partner programs. As has been communicated previously, a small group of Sarah Lawrence students studying in Italy have been instructed to return to their home country. Now, a small group of SLC students in Japan have received recommendation from their host program to return to their home country as well. The students will be able to continue their coursework remotely and will not return to the Sarah Lawrence campus until after they have completed a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine/social distancing. At that time, affected students' ability to return to campus will be based on the following conditions:

1. They have remained symptom free for at least 14 days
2. The Sarah Lawrence campus is working under normal operations and classes are in session
3. Sarah Lawrence College is in compliance with any requirements or restrictions on travel mandated by state or federal authorities

Any students, faculty, or staff with questions or concerns are encouraged to reach out to the Health and Wellness Center at 914.395.2350.

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
- 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

All should understand that these precautions are not only about individual protections, but about community health standards to protect those who are most susceptible to this virus.

Sincerely,

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