TO:         ECU FACULTY
FROM:       Marilyn Sheerer, Provost
            Virginia Hardy, Vice Chancellor Student Affairs
DATE:       January 8, 2013
SUBJECT:    INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

The early national outbreak of influenza virus is impacting university campuses all over the state and throughout the country. Influenza and influenza-like illnesses will likely produce higher than normal class absences by students or cancelled classes by faculty.

As the spring 2013 begins we expect to be inundated with the number of flu cases on our campus. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than seven days. Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

The CDC has made several recommendations to reduce the spread of influenza:
- If you are sick with influenza stay home to help prevent exposing others.
- Do not require a doctor’s note for students, faculty, or staff to confirm illness or recovery. Doctor’s offices and student health facilities may be very busy and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Academic administrators should consider altering policies on missed classes and examinations, as well as 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.

East Carolina University has enacted a responsive action to these recommendations to help maintain the integrity of education delivery while at the same time caring for the well-being of our students. The Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs have collaborated with ITCS and launched a helpful tool that will allow students to self-report having the flu or flu-like illnesses. This process was vetted by the Academic Deans and Directors group as well as the Faculty Senate in 2010 and 2011.

Here is a brief explanation of the self-reporting form. A student with the flu will go to OneStop and click on the Flu Self-Reporting Form link. There is a legal disclaimer referring to the fact that this form is not a substitute for medical treatment or diagnosis. Additionally, the student agrees that he/she understands the Dean of Students Office is tracking student usage and any misuse or abuse of the self-reporting form will be a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The student must agree to the disclaimer and statement about abuse twice in the process and then click submit to complete the self-report. An email is generated through One Stop to all instructors on the student’s class schedule that states that the student has self-reported having the flu or flu-like illness. Although this communication is valid for 72 hours from the time of reporting, it does NOT supersede any academic or course guidelines and requirements.

One of the benefits of this tool is the capability to make it active or inactive as the situation presents. Prior to the winter break, large numbers of influenza and influenza-like illnesses had already emerged on ECU’s campus, and as a result we activated the self-reporting form on One Stop.

If you have any questions about this process, please Jolene Jernigan at jerniganj@ecu.edu.