MEMORANDUM

TO: ECU Community

FROM: Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson

DATE: March 11, 2020

SUBJ: COVID-19 Update

For the past several weeks, ECU and the UNC System have closely monitored the increase in COVID-19 cases and have been working diligently to prepare for our university’s response. We are in consultation with public health officials to ensure the safety and health of our students, faculty and staff. In alignment with UNC System guidance, we are taking the following steps now to minimize health and safety risks to ECU students, faculty, staff and the larger community.

Today’s decision is intended to protect the community and slow the rate at which the virus is spreading, while maintaining the integrity of our academic offerings. At this time, no ECU community member has tested positive for COVID-19.

ECU will remain open and operational. However, we are taking the following proactive steps to protect the health of the entire ECU Community:

--- Spring break will be extended through Friday, March 20. Campus facilities and services will continue to operate on spring break hours.

--- Students who are currently out of town for Spring Break should NOT return to campus if at all possible. Students who need to return to campus to retrieve belongings, even briefly, must register with Student Affairs. Exceptions to this guidance may be requested via an online form for students who are currently on campus or who need to reside on campus to access sources and resources. Students who do remain in campus housing or in the Greenville area should be aware that access to many facilities and services – including dining and recreation – may be limited. In addition, most student activities and gatherings will be curtailed. Students will receive further guidance from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

--- Effective Monday, March 23, the university will transition to a system of alternative course delivery (for example, online, video, email-based or other forms of delivery). This transition is effective until further notice.

--- Students should monitor their student email account for additional communications.

--- For those courses which are unable to transition to an alternative course delivery, faculty will notify students regarding specific plans. We recognize that in some cases, in-person instruction is the only viable method of instruction. The goal is to minimize the gathering of large groups. Faculty will receive further guidance in a communication from the Provost.

--- For employees: Beginning March 23, ECU will seek to maximize teleworking opportunities to the extent possible for employees whose physical presence is not deemed mandatory or essential with respect to university operations, including conducting classes. Supervisors should work with employees to comply with existing policies, being mindful of individual circumstances and university needs.

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--- Effective immediately, ECU is restricted from hosting gatherings with expected attendance of 100 or more people taking place on or off campus until further notice. Events or meetings sponsored by student organizations are also included. This is for all events unless prior written authorization has been given by the Chancellor or the Provost. Check the university calendar or with event organizers to see if your event is still taking place.

--- All university-sponsored travel in North Carolina or outside the state to gatherings of 100 persons or more are suspended unless you have prior written authorization from the chancellor or the provost. This includes student organizations. The university is suspending until further notice all university-sponsored international travel.

--- The university has established a call center, 252-737-5100, with representatives from Student Affairs, Human Resources, Academic Affairs and other campus offices. It will be operational 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

--- The university recommends students, faculty and staff adhere to CDC recommendations for self-quarantine when returning to campus:

- Individuals who have traveled to CDC Level 3 and Level 2 countries, which as of March 11 include China, South Korea, Iran, Italy and Japan, should self-quarantine for 14 days off-campus effective immediately.
- As the coronavirus is rapidly spreading throughout the U.S., it is difficult for us to assess individual risks of COVID-19 for those who have traveled domestically. We recommend individuals consider self-quarantine, if exposed to someone with a known diagnosis and use discretion if they have traveled in an area with a documented outbreak.
- Employees who self-quarantine should communicate with their supervisors about working remotely during their period of quarantine.

--- All of the information above is effective until further notice.

This is an unparalleled situation for our university community, but we are prepared and equipped to meet this challenge. As we always do, ECU will stay committed to providing quality education to students, to serving our community and region, and to providing courageous leadership as we get through these trying times.

Uncertainty and impacts of this public health situation can be stressful. These decisions are not being taken lightly. Ensuring the safety of the university community is at the core of every conversation about our next steps.

Please continue to reference reliable sources for updates as our knowledge about COVID-19 develops. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides guidance on travel and the virus spread. The ECU coronavirus website is updated regularly to include evolving guidance for the university community.

I want to thank you, once again, for your patience, flexibility, understanding and, above all, your care for one another as we navigate this challenge together.