

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Dear colleagues,

I know many, if not all, of you have been watching the corona virus news with great attention. This has been a source of anxiety and confusion for many of us and there are many questions about how we move forward in light of the university's announcement that we will move to virtual learning effective tomorrow (Wednesday) morning. I must admit a deep pride in the importance of our field of public health, and the expertise of our Bloomberg school specifically. However, the recent news of moving to virtual learning is clearly disruptive.

We have all just learned of the university's decision this afternoon. We recognize the immediate disruption to term 3 during finals week, and we are working very quickly on strategies to complete the term this week. We have already worked with Dr. Rebok, whose final lecture is tomorrow and whose course final is already planned as online. I will be meeting with Judy Bass, our Vice Chair for Education, and Jeanine Parisi, our Director of the MHS program, tomorrow to ensure that we have all information about how remaining coursework and finals will be carried out. We will focus heavily on the courses offered by our department and faculty, but also recognize that our students are engaged in courses across the school and will try to facilitate information sharing to make sure students are prepared across their courses.

We will then move to implementing strategies to host 4th term courses remotely. Again, we will focus on those courses offered by our department but recognize the impact on our students involves the courses available across the whole school, so will seek to stay on top of those issues as well.

Currently, research and other activities can continue as usual, with the caveat that gatherings of 25 people or more are highly discouraged, and that international work travel is prohibited and domestic work travel is discouraged. With this in mind, our faculty meeting tomorrow will be virtual. We will send zoom info. I don't believe the students had a separate event planned for tomorrow. Luke or Alison, please correct me if I am wrong.

The school and university are continuing to consider the non-education activities, so this status may change in the future. I think at this point it behooves us all as investigators, advisors, and researchers to consider strategies for remote research and meetings, such as slack, zoom, email lists, etc.

I am sure you have many questions. I do too. We are working hard to get answers. Faculty will get more information tomorrow at the faculty meeting, if I have it. Students, please feel free to reach out to your advisor or your program director (Judy /Jeanine) with your questions. Staff and faculty, please reach out to Carlina with HR questions, Judy for education questions, and Adam for research questions. You are of course welcome to reach out to me with ANY questions as well. We will do our best to get answers as soon as possible for you.

As always, I am grateful for your commitment to public health and to education. Our flexibility and commitment to continuing our excellence in education while supporting the health and well-being of our learners, and our faculty and staff, is a further example of how truly amazing this department and school can be.

Thank you for your help and understanding through this enormous effort.

With gratitude and resolve,
Dani