

Dear International Community,

We understand that the **Coronavirus COVID-19** is causing a lot of anxiety on our campus and in the world. **ISSGS (International Student Services & Global Studies)** and SMSU (Southwest Minnesota State University) administration continues to monitor and review all relevant information relating to COVID-19. As you already know, SMSU along with all the MN State colleges and universities have already **extended spring break for another week. Classes at SMSU will resume on Monday, March 23rd**. While the risk is currently low at this time, these preemptive measures are necessary to curb the spread of COVID-19. We encourage everyone to take measures to prevent or minimize the spread of this illness. Please remember to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water
- Avoid touching your face
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue/elbow
- Frequently clean all commonly touched work surfaces and equipment
- Avoid crowds and large gatherings, practice social spacing
- If you are sick, DO NOT go out, stay home
- If you suspect that you may have the virus, please call **Avera's Call Center for COVID-19** at **1-877-282-8372** for further instructions on next steps
- Questions about COVID-19? Contact Minnesota Department of Health Public Hotline 8:00am-4:30pm at **651-201-3920**

Additionally, here are some important updates:

- SEVP and the US government is allowing some flexibility to international students to fully transition to online courses at this time if the university mandates it. Please complete this quick **COMPUTER/EMERGENCY CONTACT SURVEY** to let us know if you have access to the internet and a computer (PC or laptop – smart phones do not count) should the university decide to hold online courses as how other peer institutions have done. We also want to have an emergency contact on hand in case anything should happen to you.
- At this time, we recommend that you **DO NOT TRAVEL**; whether it is within the US or outside of the US. Once you leave the US, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to return due to all the Department of State travel advisories and Travel Restrictions due to the spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19.
- Finally, if you are graduating this May or July, remember to **APPLY FOR OPT** to maintain your status if you do not plan to return home after graduation. To apply, you must attend an OPT workshop. A second **OPT Workshop** is scheduled for **Monday, March 23rd, 3:00pm-4:30pm, SC Rm 249**. Please do not be late and plan to stay the entire time.
- Check your **I-20 Program End Date** and your **Passport** expiry date. Contact ISSGS if anything needs to be updated.
- Be wary of **Phone and Internet Frauds** regarding Coronavirus COVID-19 and your health insurance. No one from your health insurance will call you to ask for personal information over the phone. If you are suspicious, please inform ISSGS and we can investigate.

SMSU continues to review the guidelines provided by the MN Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the local Southwest Health & Human Services agencies. As we learn more about this illness, we will update the campus [Coronavirus COVID-19 SMSU website](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact ISSGS at iss@smsu.edu or call us at **507-537-6018**. Remember to check your SMSU email daily. This too shall pass and we will get through this together.

Warm blessings,

Mr. Michael Kurowski
Ms. Jamie Leonard
Dr. May Lee Moua-Vue

Email sent to International Students March 13, 2020