

# **PROTOCOL TO ADDRESS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC (COVID-19)**

Inter American University of Puerto Rico, fulfilling its responsibility to the university community, establishes the following protocol to address the emergency of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on all of its campuses, units, and additional locations in and out of Puerto Rico.

## **I. Response team, duties and responsibilities**

The Central Office has established an emergency response team composed of the following personnel:

- A. Manuel J. Fernós, Esq., President
- B. Dr. Jacqueline Álvarez Peña, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs
- C. Mrs. Olga Luna López, Vice President of Management, Finance and Systemic Services
- D. Rev. Norberto Domínguez Rodríguez, Vice President for Religious Affairs
- E. Dominique A. Gilormini De Gracia, Esq., Executive Director, Office of the President
- F. Mrs. Maggie Colón Orellano, Executive Director, Institutional Human Resources
- G. Lorraine Juarbe Santos, Esq., Executive Director of Systemic Legal Advice for Academic, Student and Corporate Affairs
- H. Vladimir Román Rosario, Esq., Executive Director of Systemic Legal Advice for Labor and Federal Affairs
- I. Mrs. Zaima Y. Negrón Guzmán, Executive Director, Public Relations and Communications
- J. Mr. Alejandro Vega, Risk Program Manager

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. President: Senior official who will determine and decree the suspension or temporary interruption, if necessary.
- b. Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs: will articulate issues of academic and student matters and the continuity of classes.
- c. Vice President of Management, Finance and Systemic Services: will develop a contingency plan in order to face the consequences of COVID-19.
- d. Vice President for Religious Affairs: will coordinate emotional support for students, employees and family members.
- e. Executive Director of the Presidency: will articulate and coordinate all the directives issued by the President, with the chief executives of academic campuses, the deans of the professional schools (Faculty of Law and

- Optometry School) and with the school directors regarding our additional locations inside and outside of Puerto Rico.
- f. Executive Director of Human Resources: will articulate labor-related issues and personnel relations, including recommending and implementing policies regarding sick leave for professors, teachers, faculty and administrative employees.
  - g. Executive Directors of Legal Advice: will offer legal advice regarding decision-making.
  - h. Executive Director, Public Relations and Communications: will maintain, articulate and coordinate official communication with the media.
  - i. Risk Program Manager: will maintain communication with the government agencies and coordinate risk management issues with all our academic units.

All campuses, professional schools, academies (Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade), additional locations in and out of Puerto Rico and the PR-SBTDC will establish a response team, constituted by faculty members, administrative, first aid health services, security and facilities personnel. Regarding the campuses where we have student residences, the chief executive will identify who will be on this response team.

## **II. Prevention measures**

### **A. Individual-level prevention**

- 1. Educational campaign: the Institution and all the academic units will use diverse means to disseminate information, including: brochures, videos, signs, links to official and government agencies, hand-washing techniques, among others.
- 2. Faculty and non-teaching personnel attendance
  - a. Any supervisor who notices that an employee has symptoms, or suspects possible contagion, will recommend that the employee withdraw temporarily from his/her work area and recommend that he/she reach out to a certified health care provider, as soon as possible.
  - b. The employee will register his/her attendance in KRONOS and the supervisor will validate the leave of absence that applies.
  - c. An employee who, due to COVID-19, claims or believes that his/her work area presents a risk to his/her health must immediately notify his/her supervisor,

verbally, in writing, by telephone, electronically or by fax. Absences for these reasons, in excess of ten (10) days will be discounted from vacation leave. This does not prevent the immediate supervisor from authorizing additional days deducting them from the employee's vacation leave after this period.

- d. Other leaves for teaching and non-teaching personnel, as established in our institutional regulations, may be used as temporary measures, including:

- 1) Sick leave to care for the illness, treatment or convalescence of children, spouses and minors or elderly or disabled persons under the care or responsibility of an employee; or
- 2) Special leave for employees with serious catastrophic illnesses.

- e. Provisional measures for registering of attendance (KRONOS)

- 1) The employee may choose to register his/her attendance daily through the device or computer assigned to his/her work area.
- 2) In those case of employees who do not use computers, the University shall have appropriate hygienic measures in the attendance registration devices. These are preventive measures and, as such, do not exempt the employee from using additional preventive and hygienic measures.
- 3) These measures do not exempt the employee from registering his/her attendance according to the established timetable. In the event that the employee avails himself/herself of any leave, the supervisor shall make appropriate modifications in KRONOS.

- f. The employee may return to his/her work station once fully recovered.

### 3. Student attendance

- a. Any teaching or non-teaching personnel who suspect that a student has symptoms or evidences the contagion with COVID-19 shall immediately inform the Dean of Student of the corresponding academic campus.
- b. The Dean of Students, faculty and teachers will recommend that the student communicate with his/her health care provider. With the health care provider's medical certificate, the student will be excused from his/her academic and student

activities. Students who do not adhere themselves of these recommendations, may be subject to summary suspensions, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter V, paragraph C, of the current General Student Regulations.

- c. The faculty, professors and teachers will offer alternatives to the students to enable them to continue participating in the courses, using the various technological tools for online education, as informed to the university community.
- d. Students may return to the classroom after a full recovery.

## B. Prevention in the work and class environment

- 1. Purchase and distribute, as possible, hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes, chlorine and alcohol in the classroom, offices and other key areas.
- 2. Wash hands with soap and water constantly.
- 3. Verify, and where necessary, replace the air conditioners filters.
- 4. If possible, add ultraviolet lights to the air filters.
- 5. **Daily cleaning and disinfection** of classrooms, rooms, offices, laboratories, doorknobs, keyboards, desks, light switches, etc.
- 6. Avoid overcrowding in the elevators.
- 7. Increase the use of simulated laboratories and reduce external practices.
- 8. Maximize the management of documents and administrative processes, using the available technological tools, in order to reduce physical contact. (E.g.: Banner. Inter Web, Office 365, Onedrive, Sharepoint, among others.)
- 9. Reduce travel abroad to the bare minimum.
- 10. Reduce academic and student group/face-to-face activities. (E.g.: conferences, symposia, workshops, etc.)
- 11. Reduce the number of face-to-face meetings. Instead, use videoconferencing systems, conference calls, among others.

### **III. Intervention/mitigation with identified cases**

#### **A. Procedures that will govern academic recesses motivated by COVID-19**

As the contagion with COVID-19 progresses at the global level it could cause the University to resort to a temporary academic or systemic recess, in order to protect the safety and health of our university and school community. This recess will not mean a total cessation in the offering of certain services, such as classes and other activities related to enrollment management.

In view of the above, the University provides the following instructions:

##### **1. Academic Units**

- a. For the continuity of the courses offered during the terms corresponding to the academic year 2019-2020, including the summer sessions and any other academic term, for the duration of the emergency:
  1. In addition to the sections of the 65 academic programs fully online and that are being offered under some of the online modalities (WA, WAB, WBA, among others), all the face-to-face sessions programmed for these terms will be offered as courses supported by the "web" (WBA). The professor and teacher will send instructions and tasks to the students through the Blackboard Learn platform and will receive from them the work done for their corresponding academic evaluation. This way, the academic activities will continue in all of the academic terms, ensuring compliance with the curricular content. Although the Blackboard Learn platform includes an email for each of the course participants, we recommend that professors and teachers ask students to provide an alternate email. Professors, teachers and students must be informed of these changes as soon as possible and offer instructions and guidance in the management of the Blackboard platform. Likewise, it is important that professors and teachers document all their efforts and interventions.
  2. Professors and teachers may use Blackboard Collaborate (available via Blackboard) to transmit, record and store their classes or lectures.
  3. All online courses offered in the academic units shall be reactivated. If the situation continues or students have to be absent for a long period of time, they can change from the classroom sections to online sections. In these cases, the

academic units will manage the corresponding processes to ensure the continuity of the students academic activities.

4. In exceptional cases, the professor may grant an Incomplete (I) so that the student can complete the course requirements during the next term.
5. If a student has been infected with COVID-19, he/she must contact the Dean of Student to notify the reasons for his/her absence. The professors, teachers and students will discuss the alternatives available to complete the course requirements regarding this health absence.
6. Upon notification of the suspension or cancellation of all classroom activities, including internships or other curricular and co-curricular activities, each professor shall provide equivalent academic experiences through other electronic tools or devices, for the duration of the decreed recess.
7. Regarding international students (inbound) who are in Puerto Rico and are using campus residency services (if applicable), the academic unit shall provide them with primary care and evaluate their referral to the corresponding health agencies for further care and follow-up. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) requires every school to have a principal designated school official (PDSO). This official of the academic unit shall be kept informed of the guidelines published by SEVP (<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm2003-01.pdf>).
8. As for the research and development projects, each academic unit shall develop a continuity plan in order to effectively manage the postponement of the activities, protecting the processes and ensuring compliance with the corresponding agencies. The personnel responsible for the management of these projects shall document and demonstrate any action to be taken during the emergency.
9. The academic units shall ensure compliance with the United States Department of Education Title IV and the Middle State Commission on Higher Education guidelines for COVID-19-related interruptions. ([https://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/21105/ED\\_Issues\\_Guidance\\_to\\_Institutions\\_on\\_Title\\_IV\\_Implications\\_of\\_Coronavirus\\_Spread](https://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/21105/ED_Issues_Guidance_to_Institutions_on_Title_IV_Implications_of_Coronavirus_Spread)) y (<https://www.msche.org/2020/03/10/msche-releases-covid-19-guidance-and-actions-to-institutions/>)

- b. Any enrolled students who are representing the University or participating in any academic or extracurricular activity outside of Puerto Rico, will be subject to the local protocols of the state, country or institution where they are located. They, in turn, shall keep in touch with the Dean of Students in order to evaluate the steps to follow, depending on the particular and current situations. Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 situation, all students are encouraged to stay informed through the following pages of the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) web pages:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fcolleges-universities.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fcolleges-universities.html)

## **2. Elementary, Intermediate and High schools**

- a. The directors and teachers of our academies will be kept informed about the development of COVID-19 in Puerto Rico through these agencies: Center for Disease Prevention and Control of the United States (CDC) and Department of Health of Puerto Rico. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>) and (<http://www.salud.gov.pr/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>)
- b. The teachers of the academies will provide the students with educational material complementary to the academic activities of the courses for the semester from January to May 2020 including summer, if necessary. Teachers are required to prepare supplementary materials, in advance, equivalent to two (2) weeks. This may vary depending on the magnitude and period of the emergency.
- c. Class assignments during this period will be part of the evaluation criteria for the courses. Inter American University of Puerto Rico will provide a general study guide to faculty regarding this matter. The academic plan will be implemented through the electronic means available at each of the academies. Each one shall determine the means of sending and receiving the assignments.
- d. As a preventive measure, as far as possible, students shall avoid moving from classrooms to classroom. Teachers shall be the one to rotate, if necessary.

## **B. Availability of telephone numbers and e-mails at the academic units and academies**

Each academic unit, including the academies (Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) will publish the telephone numbers and e-mails on the websites and on signs placed at the entrances to the facilities, where members of the university and school communities can call or write for information regarding this emergency. Staff assigned to respond to calls and messages will be trained at the academic units or at the central office.

## **C. Enrollment**

Enrollment management services at the academic units and academies shall, as far as possible, be conducted electronically (self-service). In the case of the academies, documents may be sent preliminarily by email or by fax, and subsequently by registered mail.

## **D. Family members of employees suffering from Coronavirus**

1. If a family member is sick with COVID-19, the employee may take a Family Medical Leave of absence, according to the institutional regulations.
2. If a sick relative does not fall within the definition of the law and regulations applicable to Family Medical Leave of absence, in terms of degrees of consanguinity or affinity, these absences may be charged to Vacation Leave.

## **E. Suspension of classes, closure of schools or care centers**

1. Absences due to suspension of classes, closure of schools or child-care centers shall be charged to the employee's vacation leave.

## **F. Consideration of other measures**

1. At the system level
  - a. Face-to-face meetings, shall be substituted by virtual meetings using available videoconferencing or teleconferencing;
  - b. maintain communication with students and employees through the *Connect* system.
2. Each chief executive of the academic units, directors of the additional locations out and in of Puerto Rico, and the directors of the academies shall:
  - a. establish a plan in order to temporarily substitute those employees whose functions are essential for day to day operations. Cross-training of teaching and non-teaching personnel is recommended in order to perform essential functions so that the

- Institution can continue operations. (E.g.: teaching, enrollment, security, cleaning, laboratory, cafeteria, etc.);
- b. provide the university community with behavioral and spiritual support by telephone or electronic means;
  - c. urge supervisors to provide flexible alternatives to their employees during this emergency period in order to ensure continuity of work;
  - d. immediately initiate a hygiene and prevention campaign;
  - e. each academic unit must keep a record of possible cases and report them in their respective facilities (academic units, professional schools, academies and additional locations). This register shall be confidential and the cases shall be reported immediately to the Office of the President;
  - f. request a plan for addressing and dealing with the COVID-19 crisis from concessionaires of the auxiliary business. This plan shall include measures to protect the health of the university community and their employees.
3. The University shall provide guidance to students and staff on official COVID-19 prevention and treatment information available through federal, state and local agencies:
    - a. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- <https://www.cdc.gov/>
    - b. CDC español - <https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/index.html>
    - c. Organización Mundial de la Salud - <https://www.who.int/es>
    - d. Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico -<http://www.salud.gov.pr>
    - e. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/pandemic-preparedness-resources.html>
    - f. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment-sp.html>
    - g. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>
    - h. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>
    - i. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
    - j. <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/actualidad/seguridad-nacional-ultima-hora>
    - k. <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/home.htm>
    - l. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
    - m. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/esp/when-how-handwashing.html>

- n. [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/colleges\\_universities.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/pdf/colleges_universities.pdf)
- o. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>
- p. <https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/resources/posters/en/>
- q. [https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How\\_To\\_HandWash\\_Poster.pdf](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf)
- r. [https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How\\_To\\_HandRub\\_Poster.pdf](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandRub_Poster.pdf)
- s. [https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand\\_Hygiene\\_When\\_and\\_How\\_Leaflet.pdf](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand_Hygiene_When_and_How_Leaflet.pdf)
- t. Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos - de los Estados Unidos - <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>

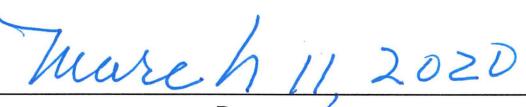
With this protocol, Inter American University of Puerto Rico encourages all chief officers to share this information to the university community in charge of all the above matters. These measures shall prevail from the time they are implemented until the Office of the President informs otherwise or amends them.

Let us pray to the Lord that some of these measures will not have to be put in place and, if necessary, for as short a time as possible. All that remains is for me to ask you to be calm and prudent regarding this situation that, together, we are going to overcome.



Manuel J. Fernós López, Esq.

President



Date