

From: Chula King

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2009 2:12 PM

Dear Faculty,

You have no doubt read reports about the spread of the H1N1 (swine) flu worldwide and its potential impact in the coming months. Because of the global presence of H1N1, the Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization are no longer tracking specific numbers of cases. Instead, they are directing their resources toward containment and mitigation efforts.

In general, suspected cases of H1N1 are no longer being confirmed. Rather, individuals with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue) are presumed to have H1N1, and are being treated accordingly. As the number of cases increases, it is likely that the medical community will encourage individuals to self care at home, and not go to the doctor or other health provider.

To date, a handful of H1N1 cases have been reported among the University community. With the start of the fall semester and the arrival of more than 10,500 students, however, we fully expect more cases to be both identified by the UWF Student Health Center staff and self reported. Because of the likely escalation in H1N1 cases among faculty, staff and students, steps should be taken now to minimize any disruption to our students' successful completion of their courses.

It is important that all members of the faculty plan for potential situations in which they, their students, or their graduate assistants miss a number of classes/labs. In addition, faculty should anticipate that students who contract H1N1 may be unable to complete assignments, quizzes and other course requirements, and take scheduled examinations. In planning for these contingencies, faculty will more often than not need to revise their course syllabi and develop strategies to utilize alternative delivery modes. Things to consider include the following:

- What steps will you take to continue your classes if you contract H1N1 and are therefore unable to come to campus?
- Are you prepared to move your face-to-face class to a distance learning format should you be unable to come to campus for an extended period of time? If you need help in this area, the staff at the Academic Technology Center (atc@uwf.edu) are available to provide assistance.
- Should you become ill, do you have colleagues who are willing to cover your classes while you are recuperating?
- How will you communicate with your students should you become ill?
- How will you notify students of cancellation or rescheduling of your classes, or migration of face-to-face classes to a distance learning format?
- How do you expect your students to communicate with you should they become ill?
- Do your syllabi clearly communicate your contingency plans related to missed classes by you or your students, missed due dates for assignments or other course requirements, missed exams, etc.?

- How will you handle students who are unable to obtain medical proof of their illness or proof that they are well enough to return to class given the likelihood that they will be encouraged to not go to the doctor, but rather engage in self care at home? (Information related to this for faculty and staff will be forthcoming from the University.)
- What will you do if a student who previously claimed to be ill because of H1N1 informs you that he/she has come down with H1N1 again? (Natural immunity should occur after infection, so a second or third request for an absence would justifiably arouse suspicion.)
- What will you do if a student who is obviously ill shows up for your class? (The University is currently looking into legal and other issues related to denying a student who is obviously ill entrance to the classroom.)
- What type of announcements might you make at the beginning of the semester to inform students of strategies to prevent infection and contingency plans if many members of the class become ill?
- What accommodations will you make for students who must care for an ill spouse or child? Should these students be encouraged to stay home to prevent transmission of illness to class members?
- What will be the best way to include relevant information in your syllabi? (CUTLA has excellent suggestions related to this at <http://uwf.edu/cutla/frs-syllabus.cfm>.)

Many of the items above also apply to situations where classes are suspended or the campus is closed because of hurricanes.

In the coming weeks, the University will disseminate updated information about H1N1 and campus-wide plans. In the meantime, you can find additional information at:

UWF Office of Environmental Health and Safety – <http://www.uwf.edu/ENVHS/>
 Campus Planning for Course Continuity - [http://uwf.edu/cutla/campus_planning—
 emergency.cfm](http://uwf.edu/cutla/campus_planning—emergency.cfm)
 Florida Department of Health - <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/DEMO/php/FluInfo.htm>
 Centers for Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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