

Dear South Texas Community:

As you know, I had promised to update you tomorrow on South Texas College of Law Houston's ongoing assessment of this fluid situation – and our plans to maintain operations while protecting all of us in the South Texas family. In light of the recent developments, however, I thought it helpful to send an earlier-than-planned update on coronavirus and COVID-19.

And, I expect that there will be several more updates in the days ahead, as well, as the situation develops.

Please note that this is a work in progress; the coronavirus landscape continues to evolve. As a result, there are some plans that we still are finalizing, including how classes would be continued virtually if the school had to close, processes for final exams, and changes to the absence policy for students affected directly or indirectly by COVID-19. More updates will be forthcoming as those plans are finalized.

### **Key Takeaways for Today:**

1. **Emergency Operations Management Team:** The law school's Emergency Operations Management Team (EOMT) is meeting regularly. **At this point, there is no evidence of coronavirus in our community, the law school remains open, and classes and activities continue.** We have stepped up cleaning across the campus and continually are monitoring the situation in consultation with local and national authorities. We will notify you immediately if there are any changes to operations. By the way, you can view the school's infectious disease protocols on the Security tab in Stanley.
2. **Stay at home if you are sick or believe you may have come into contact with the coronavirus.** Quite simply, the best way to protect our community from illness is if the virus never gets on campus. This requires that individuals who are sick – or who may carry the virus – do not come to campus. You soon will see signs at the front door informing all who come to campus not to enter our building if they are sick, have been exposed to the coronavirus, or have traveled to high-risk countries.
3. **(Re-)Consider Travel, particularly ANY International Travel:** Consistent with the practice across higher education in response to the coronavirus, South Texas is asking all faculty, staff, and students to update the school on their recent travels (within the last two weeks) and future travels (between now and the end of April). (Rice, U of H, Texas A&M, and other schools across the country have implemented similar registration programs.)

Please visit [www.stcl.edu/travel](http://www.stcl.edu/travel) to complete this form. STCL Houston intends to safeguard this information and will use the information simply to assess our coronavirus risk.

This form is particularly important if you or any member of your household have traveled to, or plan to travel to, CDC-designated Level 3 countries (currently China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea) or Level 2 countries (currently Japan).

**Please note: Pursuant to recommendations from the CDC, travel to countries designated Level 3 or Level 2 – even if that designation is made within 14 days after your return to the United States – will result in a mandatory self-quarantine for 14 days.** (It is because of the risk of this mandatory quarantine that some schools, like Texas A&M and U of H, have gone so far as

to recommend against any international travel.) For more information about this process, please visit the [CDC's website](#) for isolation and quarantine protocols.

4. **Updates and FAQs:** Please see a landing page we have created for coronavirus and COVID-19, as well as FAQs, at [www.stcl.edu/health](http://www.stcl.edu/health). We will update the page regularly. In the meantime, if you have a question, please email [health@stcl.edu](mailto:health@stcl.edu); we will look to answer questions in the next update or on the FAQ page.
5. **Helpful Reminders:** In the interim, please continue to follow key wellness guidelines, as recommended by the CDC:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

In addition, please be prudent. Since my last update to you, the CDC now is recommending “social distancing,” which is defined as:

- Avoiding public places where close contact with others may occur;
- Avoiding local public transportation (e.g., bus, taxi, ride share); and
- Maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others where practical.

**In short,**

- **Maintain perspective.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**
- **(Re-)consider travel plans.**
- **Be prudent about health and wellness.**
- **Watch for new updates.**

My next update will be on Thursday, unless there is a reason for one sooner.

There is an old adage: Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. And we are preparing for various eventualities that none of us would have considered remotely possible just a few weeks ago.

And yet, I sincerely hope we continue to enjoy a safe and healthy semester – all the way through graduation for those looking forward to walking the stage.