

IMPORTANT: MESSAGE FROM INTERIM VICE PROVOST OF GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Dear Students,

Our University and our world are confronting an unprecedented challenge. We are weighing the needs of our international students in all our decisions, and the Penn State administration and your faculty members are working tirelessly to make decisions to support you as you continue your academic work in the least disruptive way possible. Our top priority is protecting your health and well-being as we continue to support your academic progress. We must be flexible and responsive as the coronavirus situation unfolds, but we know that this sometimes leaves you with questions that do not have easy answers.

The University's decision to extend the remote-delivery period for all classes through at least the spring semester, will make travel decisions easier for some of you. Some of you have already returned home and others will make a similar decision in the next few days. The first thing you should note is that for those of you who return home, your immigration status will remain intact. This now makes it easier for you to make decisions based on your needs, your families' wishes and your academic considerations.

Whether you have already returned to your home country or you are still in the United States, we understand that many of you are wondering what is next as the coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve. You may be asking, where is the best location for you to remain at this time? It is important to consider your personal health and safety, and your ability to find a location to try to continue your education. This decision will also have to consider current travel restrictions and bans in the United States as well as your home country. We do understand that this is a personal decision that you are faced with and we want to support you as best as we can during this time. Please consider the following information in your decision-making:

- Global Programs staff will continue to work remotely and will be available to support you during this time through various media such as email, social media, video conferencing and telephone. This will include online programming support from the Student Engagement and Intercultural Learning (SEIL) team (seil@psu.edu) and connections with DISSA staff resources through [iStart](#), by email to DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu if problems with iStart, or by telephone (814-865-6348 #2)
- The University has made on-campus housing available to all international and exchange students who currently have an on-campus housing assignment. Housing assignments are made with the need for "social distancing" taken into account. This may require some students move from their currently assigned rooms. We will make every effort to allow students to remain in their dorms and will only temporarily reassign a student if we believe it is in the best interest of the student's health and safety. We have also committed to a low occupancy rate for all on-campus student housing.
- Penn State's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) remains in effect.

International students enrolled in SHIP will have the full support of our UHS services including counseling/psychological and medical support. Please see below for further details.

- During the remote learning period, Pollock dining commons will be open for meal periods for take-out option only. Market Pollock will also be available.

We understand the predicament in which this global pandemic has placed you, and we are doing all we can to find the best way forward as the situation is constantly evolving. We will do all we can to work with you over the weeks and months ahead. **Please monitor your email daily as this will be our primary communication tool.**

If you need assistance, please know that the following University resources are available to you:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at University Park** is open for services. Students can receive services by calling CAPS at (814) 863-0395 to schedule a phone appointment to discuss their concerns and review treatment options. If students have immediate urgent concerns, they can contact CAPS Monday through Friday (8 a.m. –5 p.m.), the Penn State Crisis Line 24/7 at (877) 229-6400, or the 24/7 Crisis Text Line (Text “LIONS” to 741741).
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Commonwealth Campuses:** Services and hours will vary by campus location. Please contact the local campus office: studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/caps-campuses
- **Directorate of International Student & Scholar Advising (DISSA):** Contact DISSA for answers to visa and government regulatory questions via iStart.gp.psu.edu, email DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu, or phone at (814) 865-6348 (#2).?
- **Student Engagement and Intercultural Learning:** Contact seil@psu.edu or phone 814-867-6101 for all other inquiries
- **Health Related Questions:** University Health Services at 814-863-0774.
- **Coronavirus Information from Penn State:** Visit psu.edu/virusinfo for the latest information and actions from the University related to COVID-19.

As we move forward, the more information we have on individual student’s circumstances, the easier it will be for us to plan and to help. On Monday, once you have had a few days to plan and make arrangements, we will send out a survey to find out who has returned to their homes, who has traveled elsewhere, and who is still on campus, later next week we will send out a second survey to ask how well you are managing to connect and continue with your remote learning. We recognize that some of you will return home and find that you don’t have the access or bandwidth necessary for continuing with remote learning. While we don’t have answers yet, we are working on contingency plans for that situation.

As circumstances change in the coming days and weeks, we will continue to keep you informed.

Meanwhile if you have immediate visa and government regulatory questions, please contact DISSA via iStart.gp.psu.edu, email DISSA-Adviser@psu.edu, or phone at (814) 865-6348 (#2) and for other questions contact Student Engagement and Intercultural Learning by [email](mailto:seil@psu.edu) or phone at +1 814 867 6101. In either case, as staff are predominantly working from home, email is likely to be more effective. Emails to DISSA should always be from your Penn State email

account.

Look for University updates and answers to many of your personal and academic questions on the Penn State coronavirus information site: psu.edu/virusinfo.

Please take care.

Sincerely,

Robert Crane
Interim Vice Provost for Global Programs

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DISSA Adviser

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