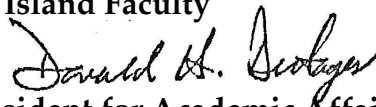




MEMORANDUM

TO: University of Rhode Island Faculty

FROM: Donald H. DeHayes 
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: January 15, 2014

SUBJECT: Important Update: Flu Season

Colleagues, welcome back for the spring semester. As I am certain you are aware, on January 8th, the Rhode Island Department of Health and CDC declared flu widespread in the state. URI will be issuing a FLU ALERT encouraging all students, faculty, and staff who had not been vaccinated this year to seek vaccination prior to returning for classes. We held multiple clinics last fall and local pharmacies, walk-in clinics, and physician offices have vaccine available.

This upcoming semester may also be an unusual one as we, and most universities across the country, confront the widespread influenza-like illness. Because influenza-like illness is highly contagious, the CDC is strongly urging that anyone with the flu or flu-like symptoms refrain from attending classes and other community events. Typical symptoms will include rapid onset of fever plus sore throat, or fever plus cough, although not everyone with influenza-like illness will have a fever.

As a large proportion of our URI community is in the high-risk group, we must plan accordingly. In order for us to be prepared, I am asking that we pull together as a community and assist each other and our students to ensure the success and continuity of our academic, research, and service missions.

First and foremost, I ask that each of you please include the following (or similar) language on your syllabi:

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

Illness Due to Flu

The nation is experiencing widespread influenza-like illness. If any of us develop flu-like symptoms, we are being advised to stay home until the fever has subsided for 24 hours. So, if you exhibit such symptoms, please do not come to class. Notify me at 874-xxxx or xxx@uri.edu of your status, and we will communicate through the medium we have established for the class. We will work together to ensure that course instruction and work is completed for the semester.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have posted simple methods to avoid transmission of illness. These include: covering your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing; frequent washing or sanitizing your hands; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and staying home when you are sick. For more information please view www.cdc.gov/flu or [www.cdc.gov/flu.gov](http://www.cdc.gov/flu). URI Health Services web page, www.health.uri.edu, will carry advice and local updates.

In addition, I ask you to do the following to minimize the health risk to faculty, staff, and students and to ensure a pathway to academic success for students confronted with the flu.

1. Using electronic communication media (e.g. email, online, Sakai), be prepared to alert students throughout the semester of any modifications to the syllabus or changes to the class schedule.
2. Please adjust your class attendance policy to ensure that students who are ill with influenza are not penalized for missing class. We do not want ill students in class spreading the virus. Students who become sick need to know that they have your permission to stay home and get better without incurring any penalty. Based on guidelines from the CDC, please do not require students to get a note from a health care provider. Given the possibility that many people may seek care or advice simultaneously, the CDC is advising that people seek care only if they have underlying risk factors or emergent symptoms.
3. Be attentive to your own health and encourage departmental planning to address illness among faculty and staff. Our hope is to minimize the cancellation of classes. Options include having colleagues cover classes, and, if comfortable and appropriate, using online activities, such as Sakai, podcasts, video conferencing through Skype, email, etc. to ensure delivery of course materials. For those of you needing remote library research assistance, you can contact the library via instant messaging.
4. While we want to be flexible and caring toward our students, we do not want to relax academic standards or expectations. Please think about alternative ways to effectively manage your course(s) and accomplish your learning goals under unpredictable circumstances.
5. Please support student learning in situations where students have had to miss class. This may include making class notes available and/or being flexible with makeup assignments and exams. Student learning must continue; we do not want students to be inappropriately assigned "incompletes" or feel compelled to drop classes because they were ill for a few days.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention to this serious matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office (874-4410 or 4408). It is an important time for our campus community to pull together in support of each other and our students and to ensure the integrity of our academic enterprise.