UPDATE ON COVID-19 AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDANCE
By Enrique Lavernia, Provost and EVC, and Albert Chang,
Medical Director of UCI Student Health Center

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

Dear Anteaters:

We write to provide you an update on the COVID-19 outbreak and impacts as it pertains to our campus community. As you may have seen in the latest news coverage, COVID-19 has now spread to regions across the globe including Japan, South Korea, and Italy. Researchers at UCI and elsewhere continue to work around the clock to better understand and mitigate the impacts and transmission of this novel coronavirus.

While there are no current known cases in Orange County, it is important to keep in mind best practices for staying well and considering your risk of exposure to the virus through travel activity. This is critically important to keep in mind as spring break is around the corner and many students, faculty and staff are making plans to travel home or make other trips.

No matter where you travel, always know the status of your visa, and always have some emergency contacts. And, while there, you should also consult the website of the country you are visiting to see what policies are in place. Medical experts advise that the risk is low if you are traveling to a country where there are few or no cases of COVID-19. However, it is emphasized that you should evaluate your trip each day and look for any updates from the local authorities and from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Whether for university business or personal travel, let UCI know if you plan to travel anytime. The best way to do this is by registering your travel information at UC International Travel Registry even if you are a U.S. Citizen. Sharing your travel information allows us to have knowledge of your whereabouts should you be in an area of the world that sees an increase in COVID-19 cases such that your return home becomes compromised.

The details and guidance offered below reflect the current state of affairs and recommendations from the CDC and the U.S. Department of State. Please take care to read through them if you have any travel planned. Further below, we offer links to official resources and contact information should you need to connect with someone about your individual situation.

Closer to home, we ask that everyone continue to do their part in preserving a health community at UCI and prevent spreading illnesses, including the influenza which continues to be a bigger threat locally. Remember these simple tips to help stay well:

• Always wash your hand with soap and water
• Cover your mouth with your elbow when you cough
• Stay in your room if you are sick
• Clean and disinfect surfaces often

The golden rule for travel is this: if you are the one who is sick, stay home, do not travel, and wear a mask, even for the flu.
Finally, as Doug Haynes, vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion recently noted in a campus email and [podcast on inclusion during difficult times](https://www.uci.edu/campus_focus/z5/provost_and_executive_vice_chancellor/2020/02/04/podcast-on-inclusion-during-difficult-times.html), please be mindful of cultural and racial aspects of the present time, particularly with regard to the growing awareness of the threat of the novel coronavirus. UCI welcomes international scholars and values our partnerships around the world.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in protecting the UCI community.

**Enrique J. Lavernia, Ph.D.**  
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Distinguished Professor, Department of Materials Science and Engineering

**Albert S. Chang, MD, MPH**  
Medical Director, UCI Student Health Center

### INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDANCE

#### Restrictions

- As of Feb. 25, CDC has issued the following travel guidance related to COVID-19:  
  - China – Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel – last updated Feb. 22;  
  - South Korea – Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel – last updated Feb. 24;  
  - Japan – Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions – last updated Feb. 22;  
  - Hong Kong – Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions – issued Feb. 19

- CDC also recommends that all travelers reconsider cruise ship voyages into or within Asia at this time.

- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions traveling in these regions may be at increased risk for severe disease.

#### Let UCI know you plan to travel

- All travelers who would like to engage in essential travel to China and South Korea (defined in the following categories) must obtain prior approval as follows:

  - The UCI campus has an existing travel approval policy and process that applies to students. This policy and process are being temporarily extended to include faculty and staff travel to China and South Korea.

  - The [Policy for Student International Activities](https://www.uci.edu/student_compliance/policies/policies/policy-0003.html) includes a review process by the UCI International Risk Review Team which will temporarily include representation from UCI Health and the Academic Senate, as this policy is being extended to include faculty.

  - During this time, anyone who believes their travel to China or South Korea is essential should contact the UCI International Risk Review Team to request review and approval before travel. Please email [global@uci.edu](mailto:global@uci.edu) to request a review.

  - UC restrictions do not apply to travel that is solely personal, but such travelers should be aware of travel risks, and of [federal government warnings](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/travel-warnings.html) on any type of travel to/from China.

#### Returning Travelers from Restricted Regions

- CDC is advising returning travelers (during the past 14 days) from South Korea OR China AND who feel sick with fever or cough, or have difficulty breathing to:

  - Seek medical advice. Call ahead before you go to a doctor’s office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
  - Avoid contact with others.

- If you have been in close contact with someone who is ill, quarantine for 14 days. Contact your local health department if you have any questions.

- For U.S. citizens and permanent residents, you will likely be expected to quarantine for 14 days upon return to the U.S., even if you are asymptomatic.

- If you are a U.S. Citizen. Sharing your travel information allows us to have knowledge of your whereabouts so we can alert you if there are any changes to your travel plans. The easiest way to do this is by registering your travel information at UC International Travel Registry even if you are not traveling to the restricted regions.

- Whether for university business or personal travel, let UCI know if you plan to travel anytime. The best way to do this is by registering your travel information at UC International Travel Registry even if you are not traveling to the restricted regions.

- The details and guidance offered below reflect the current state of affairs and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).  
  - CDC also recommends that all travelers reconsider cruise ship voyages into or within Asia at this time.
  - The U.S. State Department issues travel advisories for various countries, for many reasons, in cooperation with the CDC.  
  - Check out their videos on the subject, too.

- The website of the World Health Organization is a good place to start. There is a tab for “travel advice” that posts regular updates on locations and how to best protect yourself while traveling.

- We will continue to monitor global health-related events and update our guidance accordingly. The UCI site is a good place to start.

- The following campus resources are available for assistance or guidance:

  - [U.S. Department of State](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/travel-warnings.html)
  - [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/)
  - [Centers for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/)
  - [Employee Assistance Program](https://www.uci.edu/about_us/employee_life/benefits/employee_assistance_program.html)
  - [UCI Podcast: Inclusivity during difficult times](https://www.uci.edu/podcast/)
  - [Student Assistance Program](https://www.uci.edu/student_compliance/policies/policies/policy-0003.html)
  - [UCI Health](https://www.ucihealth.org/)
  - [Academic Senate](https://www.uci.edu/academics/senate/)
  - [UCI International Risk Review Team](https://www.uci.edu/student_compliance/policies/policies/policy-0003.html)
  - [UCI Policy for Student International Activities](https://www.uci.edu/student_compliance/policies/policies/policy-0003.html)

- The website of the World Health Organization is a good place to start. There is a tab for “travel advice” that posts regular updates on locations and how to best protect yourself while traveling.

- The U.S. State Department issues travel advisories for various countries, for many reasons, in cooperation with the CDC. Check out their videos on the subject, too.

- The website of the World Health Organization is a good place to start. There is a tab for “travel advice” that posts regular updates on locations and how to best protect yourself while traveling.

- The [Centers for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/) and the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/) continue to work around the clock to better understand and mitigate the impacts and transmission of this novel coronavirus.

- Researchers at UCI and elsewhere continue to study COVID-19. Please visit our website for the latest updates.

- The following categories must obtain prior approval as follows:

  - UC restrictions do not apply to travel that is solely personal, but such travelers should be aware of travel risks, and of federal government warnings on any type of travel to/from China.

- The UCI campus has an existing travel approval policy and process that applies to students. This policy and process are being temporarily extended to include faculty and staff travel to China and South Korea.

- The [Policy for Student International Activities](https://www.uci.edu/student_compliance/policies/policies/policy-0003.html) includes a review process by the UCI International Risk Review Team which will temporarily include representation from UCI Health and the Academic Senate, as this policy is being extended to include faculty.

- During this time, anyone who believes their travel to China or South Korea is essential should contact the UCI International Risk Review Team to request review and approval before travel. Please email global@uci.edu to request a review.

- UC restrictions do not apply to travel that is solely personal, but such travelers should be aware of travel risks, and of federal government warnings on any type of travel to/from China.
• We understand that you may have made plans to travel to China and/or South Korea and booked your trip prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, and that you may have family in these countries. Please note that if you travel to China or South Korea, and are respectively a Chinese or Korean national, it is not likely you will be let back into the United States.

• For U.S. citizens and permanent residents, you will likely be expected to quarantine for 14 days upon your return. Whether you are under mandatory quarantine or self-quarantine, you will not be allowed back onto the UCI campus until after the quarantine ends. Be aware of how this may affect your attendance at classes, study groups, campus events – and ultimately your grades.

Stay Informed

• To be the most informed before your journey, take a look at travel advisory information on these websites:
  - The website of the World Health Organization is a good place to start. There is a tab for “travel advice” that posts regular updates on locations and how to best protect yourself while traveling. Check out their videos on the subject, too.
  - The U.S. State Department issues travel advisories for various countries, for many reasons, in addition to COVID-19.
  - The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention has advised Americans to cancel all nonessential travel to China and South Korea, and also provides regular updates regarding other countries where there are cases of COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 and related impacts, please visit the following sites:

• Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
• Campus EH&S Public Health Information
• UCI Podcast: Coronavirus discussion with Student Health medical director Dr. Albert Chang
• Videocast: 2019 Novel Coronavirus: Current State of Knowledge and Public Health Response
• UCI Podcast: Inclusivity during difficult times

The following campus resources are available for assistance or guidance:

• Student Health Center
• Counseling Center
• Employee Assistance Program
• Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity