



## Communication on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Wednesday 11 March 2020

**Dear University for Peace Community,  
Students, Faculty and Staff,**

On 10 March 2020, the UPEACE Coronavirus Task Force held an extended meeting with the Dean, the Academic Coordinator, Academic Department Heads and other University units and key stakeholders, and a series of additional response measures were taken that are hereby communicated to our Community.

The UPEACE Task Force on Coronavirus wishes to inform you all that we have been closely monitoring the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide, both nationally and locally; we have had daily permanent briefings of the Task Force with our partners at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Costa Rica, and of course, the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Health.

As of this morning, the WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 will now be characterized as a **pandemic**. Meanwhile, Costa Rican health authorities declared a State of Yellow Alert, thereby mobilizing resources and scaling up containment & mitigation efforts, including the assurance that essential services like potable water supply (despite water shortages in several communities due to the decreased supply that occurs during the dry season), public transportation and medical services will continue to work with regularity.

So, in light of the scaling-up of response from the Costa Rican Government and in consultation with our partners worldwide, we hereby officially communicate to Community Members (Students, Faculty, Staff Members, contractors and visitors) the implementation of additional preventive measures against COVID-19 here at UPEACE:

### **I. PREVENTIVE MEASURES ABOUT BUSINESS, ACADEMIC AND INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AND TRANSIT**

1. From here on, the **Travel History Registry Protocol** (by which the travel pattern of all campus-goers must be declared before their arrival on campus) will be extended to all community members (be it faculty, students, staff or visitors), meaning that everyone will be asked to declare their travel plans and corresponding itinerary before traveling outside of Costa Rica. These travel arrangements must be sent to [COVID19@UPEACE.org](mailto:COVID19@UPEACE.org).
2. Following with its previous recommendation, UPEACE continues to discourage its faculty, staff members and students from undertaking any international **non-essential travel**, be it academic, business or pleasure related. Anyone planning to travel, for any reason, must communicate their travel itinerary to [COVID19@UPEACE.org](mailto:COVID19@UPEACE.org).
3. UPEACE will transition all face-to-face courses into online courses starting next **Monday, 16 March 2020 and until the end of Easter Week (12 April 2020)**. Students can coordinate directly with their Professors/Academic Department Head to arrange virtual or face-to-face continuation of classes for the rest of this week.



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4. UPEACE will **cancel the travel of all Visiting Faculty members**, effective immediately and until the end of Easter Week. Instead, Visiting Faculty members will deliver their scheduled courses through an online platform. Any questions about course logistics should be cleared with your Academic Department Head.
5. All Directors and Coordinators will work with their corresponding staff members to determine what positions allow **teleworking** (working from home), in order to minimize the number of persons on campus on a daily basis. Each Director/Coordinator will negotiate specific products/deliverables with their staff and submit this work plan to the Rector by week's end.

## II. PREVENTIVE MEASURES REGARDING GROUP GATHERINGS

1. UPEACE has already cancelled/postponed all non-essential activities on campus that involve group gatherings; however, future events will be consider on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, as of today, anyone organizing an activity or group gathering on campus must seek the approval of the Coronavirus Task Force by sending their request to [COVID19@UPEACE.org](mailto:COVID19@UPEACE.org).

## III. PREVENTIVE MEASURES REGARDING STUDENTS' ACCESS TO MEDICAL SERVICES

1. UPEACE reminds all students that the University provides universal health coverage to all students through the Costa Rican Public Health System, namely the Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social (CCSS).
2. UPEACE reminds students that the Medical Office processes all insurance enrolments to the CCSS; however, the registration/affiliation to the system is an individual personal errand that must be completed by each student in order to guarantee their access to these services. **Therefore, UPEACE orders anyone who hasn't completed your affiliation to do so as soon as possible.**
3. Students are also reminded that, as per your admissions contract, all students are required to purchase private insurance that includes medical expenses coverage. Therefore, we encourage all students to contact their private insurance carriers to inquire about claiming procedures, emergency medical assistance and to clarify whether or not their purchased insurance provides coverage for pandemics. UPEACE strongly encourages students who waived their insurance admissions requirement to consider purchasing private insurance in the case that they wish to secure access to private medical care.

## IV. ESSENTIAL SERVICES ON CAMPUS

1. The following essential services will continue to operate normally: UPEACE Clinic (healthcare services), library, cafeteria, transportation (reduced schedule will be communicated).

## V. TIMEFRAME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE MEASURES

1. UPEACE will apply these measures until the end of Easter Break (**12 April 2020**). The continuation of all or some of these measures thereafter will be assessed on a regular basis until then, and appropriate communications issued from time to time.



2. The Task Force on Coronavirus will continue to meet daily to monitor and assess the situation and the effectiveness of the response measures.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING THE CONTRACTION OF A RESPIRATORY INFECTION

We remind all our community members of the following general measures of hygiene and self-care, which have proven effective in limiting the spread of respiratory-disease-inducing-pathogens:

1. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. **Why?** Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
2. Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. **Why?** When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. **Why?** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and make you sick.
4. Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent/flexed elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. **Why?** Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as the cold, flu and COVID-19.
5. Stay informed on the latest developments on COVID-19. Follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your national and local public health authority or your employer on how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. **Why?** National and local authorities will have the most up-to-date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on you should be doing to protect yourself.
6. Keep up to date on the latest COVID-19 hotspots (cities or local areas where COVID-19 is spreading widely). If possible, avoid traveling to those places – especially if you are an older person, have diabetes, heart or lung disease. **Why?** You have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 if you are in one of those areas and meet the aforementioned criteria.

### Source: World Health Organization

English: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Spanish: <https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>