



University for Peace



Communication on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response #4 Tuesday 17 March 2020

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

As you all know, UPEACE has created a Task Force charged with the monitoring of the outbreak, informing & educating our community on both infection prevention & infection control measures, ensuring UPEACE's compliance with the Costa Rican Government's national response by informing and advising the administration on the recommended actions to be implemented and that are proportional to each different phase of development of the outbreak.

In an effort to update you on the latest and most recent news and to prevent the spread of erroneous information that could prove to be counterproductive, we would like to update you on the current situation and the University's response.

I. COSTA RICA DECLARES A STATE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

On **Monday 16 March 2020**, the President of Costa Rica declared a **National State of Emergency** in Costa Rica, which includes the following measures:

1. The country remains on **yellow alert**. This makes it possible to take budgetary and administrative measures more quickly and to provide the continuity of essential services.
2. All **schools** (public and private) **are closed** until 4 April 2020 and classes are expected to resume on 13 April 2020.
3. In the case of flights, as of **Wednesday 18 March and until Sunday 12 April**, only Costa Rican citizens and legal residents may enter the country. Air transport, commerce and supply crews are exempted from this provision. In addition, Costa Rican citizens and legal residents who enter, will have to undergo mandatory preventive isolation for 14 days in accordance with the sanitation order they will receive from immigration officials at the point of entry.
4. All non-essential personnel nationwide are asked to **telework** whenever possible to reduce person-to-person contact.
5. All pubs, bars, nightclubs, and discotheques have been closed indefinitely to avoid person-to-person contact.

II. PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN ON CAMPUS TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The UPEACE Campus remains **open with certain restrictions**. Starting on **Monday 16 March**, the Healthcare Staff on campus implemented a strict social-distancing protocol on campus, including the following measures:

1. All classes will be conducted **online**;
2. All medical personnel will wear a protective **face mask** at all times to avoid possible asymptomatic transmission when assisting patients;



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3. **Temperature checks** have been actively implemented on campus for all campus-goers;
4. All non-essential personnel are **teleworking**. Only essential staff members remain on campus to ensure the continuation of essential services for students;
5. Individual training has been provided for campus-goers regarding **social distancing** (minimum of 2 meters between each person at all times);
6. All common areas and office spaces have been marked to indicate the **transit routes** that would enable individuals to observe the minimum 2-meter distance between them;
7. The **occupation capacity** for all common areas has been cut to 50%, in accordance with government guidelines;
8. **Institutional vehicles** have been equipped with physical barriers between the driver and passengers and rigorous cleaning and disinfection guidelines have been put in place (before, during and after transporting passengers); and
9. The logistics inside the **cafeteria** have also changed: food must be ordered beforehand at cafeteria@upeace.org; no cutlery/plates/mugs/glasses/trays can leave the cafeteria area; cutlery will be provided by the cafeteria staff and will no longer be on free display. These steps have been taken in order to maintain the highest cleanliness standards. Additionally, all cafeteria staff will wear protective face masks while handling food.

III. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF MEMBERS

Starting **Monday 16 March**, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Government of Costa Rica and the University for Peace, it has been decided that all **psychological support** will continue and will be carried out through **online sessions**.

These sessions will last 30 minutes and will be coordinated via email. If you already have a standing appointment, it will stay the same (date/time). In order to schedule an appointment, please email ncarmioli@upeace.org.

In case of an emotional emergency, you may contact our Psychologist and Wellness Coordinator, Nasdia Carmiol, at +506 8876-1753.

IV. MEASURES REGARDING BUSINESS, ACADEMIC AND INDEPENDENT TRAVEL AND TRANSIT

As mentioned above, as of **Wednesday 18 March and until Sunday 12 April**, only Costa Rican citizens and legal residents may enter the country. Air transport, commerce and supply crews are exempted from this provision. In addition, Costa Rican citizens and legal residents who enter, will have to undergo mandatory preventive isolation for 14 days in accordance with the sanitation order they will receive from immigration officials at the point of entry.

UPEACE cannot prohibit students or international staff members from returning to their home country; however, given that we are unaware of the current migratory condition of each individual, we highly recommend against international travel at this time, as we cannot guarantee your reentry into the country and cannot negotiate with immigration authorities at this time given the current situation.



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If you choose to return to your home country, it is **mandatory** that you inform the UPEACE Coronavirus Task Force by emailing a copy of your itinerary to COVID19@upeace.org. Please be as specific as possible.

V. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

There is an inordinate amount of information circulating on social media, television and traditional media outlets. Although much of this information is in keeping with the guidelines established by the World Health Organization, there is still a large amount of misinformation being shared on a massive scale.

In order to maintain both a clear head and a correct decontamination, cleaning and disinfection protocol, we recommend the following:

1. Please consult the official WHO COVID-19 page for correct and up-to-date information regarding this pandemic: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
2. For specific information on Costa Rica and COVID-19, please consult the official Ministry of Public Health page: <https://www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr/>.
3. We ask that you verify any information received which contradicts the official guidelines set by either the WHO or the Costa Rican government. Please do not share unverified information with others, as this can be dangerous to public health, in addition to contribution to the disintegration of social cohesion.
4. Please direct all questions, doubts and concerns to COVID19@upeace.org.

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 **wash your hands with soap and water**. Afterwards, or in the temporary absence of access to water and soap, clean your hands with an **alcohol-based hand rub (minimum concentration: 70% alcohol)**. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands. Make sure to read the label before purchasing the alcohol-based gel.
2. Maintain a **2-meter distance** between yourself and others. Why? It has been proven that social distancing is the most effective form of containment at this point. Please consult this article for more information about how social distancing works: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/>
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



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cough or sneeze, then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Why? Droplets spread viruses. 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 from **trusted and official sources**. 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 what 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.



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The University for Peace (UPEACE) is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and highly-diverse community, dedicated to, as stated in our charter, "promoting, among all human beings, the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence." As the world responds to the COVID-19 virus, we remind you all that we are a global community and that this virus knows no race, gender, class or nationality. Fear and misinformation around COVID-19 can make people feel even more apprehensive and vulnerable and lead to prejudicial comments and attitudes.

Our commitment to **inclusion, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence** is stronger than ever during this time of global awareness. We remind students, faculty and staff that our Coronavirus Task Force is available to support you in whichever way you need in order to feel and stay safe.

Please email covid19@upeace.org if you are experiencing any harassment or discrimination.



Universidad para la Paz



La Universidad para la Paz (UPAZ) es una comunidad multicultural, multiétnica y muy diversa, dedicada, como se establece en nuestra carta, a "promover, entre todos los seres humanos, el espíritu de comprensión, tolerancia y coexistencia pacífica". A medida que el mundo responde al virus COVID-19, les recordamos a todos que somos una comunidad global y que este virus no conoce raza, género, clase o nacionalidad. El miedo y la desinformación en torno a COVID-19 pueden hacer que la gente se sienta aún más aprensiva y vulnerable y puede conducir a comentarios y actitudes prejuiciosas.

Nuestro compromiso con la **inclusión, la tolerancia y la coexistencia pacífica** es más fuerte que nunca en esta época de mundial. Recordamos a los estudiantes, profesores y personal que nuestro Grupo de Trabajo sobre el Coronavirus está disponible para apoyarlos en lo que necesiten para sentirse y mantenerse seguros.

Por favor, envíen un correo electrónico a covid19@upeace.org si están experimentando algún tipo de acoso o discriminación.