

Friday, March 6

Dear Colleagues:

By now you have all read President Valerie Smith's [email](#) about COVID-19. I want to clarify our rationale related to domestic and international travel and offer additional specifics.

We firmly believe that travel—including off-campus study and other co-curricular opportunities for students—plays a critical role in allowing our students to learn and expand their horizons. Likewise, faculty travel for conferences, research, and more can be critical to your scholarship, research, and professional development. Amid this epidemic, we seek to act judiciously, make sensible decisions, and not be cowed by fear and rumor or succumb to xenophobia or discrimination.

As a reminder, the College prohibits travel to areas that are under either a Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) and Level 4 travel advisory (Do Not Travel) from the U.S. Department of State, or a Level 3 travel warning (Avoid Non Essential Travel) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We will continue to follow guidance from the U.S. government on travel-related issues affected by COVID-19. We cannot condone travel to places without good health care, where health care systems are currently overtaxed, or where the ability to leave quickly in the midst of this global health crisis could likely be restricted.

Below is additional information so that members of our campus community can make informed decisions regarding future business-related travel.

**Travel during Spring Break:**

For faculty and staff, we encourage travelers to review the status of upcoming conferences or professional meetings with the organizations hosting the conferences. In some cases, conferences are offering reimbursements for program fees or vouchers for future conferences. We encourage travelers flying to conference destinations to refer to the ticketing airline for updated flight statuses. For College-sponsored travel only, the College will mitigate change fees charged by the airlines on rebooked flights. If your travel is canceled due to COVID-19, but the travel expense has not yet been reimbursed, the College will still approve your expense reimbursement. However, the airline credit must be used for future College-sponsored travel. For future College-sponsored travel, please use our partner travel agencies: Avenue Two (for individuals) and Key Travel (for group or individual travel). Please delay purchasing tickets for travel in May, June, and beyond unless you can cancel or change those reservations. Travelers who are faculty, instructional staff, and those in departments that report to the Provost who incur additional expense for changed or cancelled flights should contact Administrative

Coordinator for Academic Programs Jennifer Piddington ([jpiddin1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:jpiddin1@swarthmore.edu)) in the Provost's Office.

In addition, the College has foreign travel accident insurance for medical treatment and overseas extraction for individuals who become ill. (Please be in touch with Assistant Vice President for Finance and Controller Alice Turbiville for specific information [aturbiv1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:aturbiv1@swarthmore.edu).) For more frequently asked questions about travel and ticketing and corresponding ticketing cancellations, please refer to the [Business Office website](#).

**Travel Registry:**

As President Smith shared in her email, for community members traveling on college business or for personal reasons over spring break and throughout the month of March, we are asking travelers to [register their travel plans](#).

**Department Searches:**

My office is advising departments that are actively engaged in faculty searches to think creatively about how to conduct interviews during the remainder of this spring. While bringing candidates to campus continues to be our common practice, we recognize the personal nature of travel at this time, and we do not want to discourage potential job candidates from employing their own discretion when accepting invitations to an on-campus interview. We ask that you include a sentence or two in your invitations to finalists coming to campus that offers alternatives to an on-campus interview. However, no candidate should feel forced to explain their reasoning for being uncomfortable in traveling.

**Speakers, Performers, and Others Invited to Campus**

Many of you and your departments and programs have events planned which bring in colleagues, scholars, performers, and speakers to the College. As with your own travel, we ask that you follow the travel principles noted above. We also encourage you to be in conversation with those individuals you have invited to campus. If they decide they can no longer travel, you can reimburse any travel costs that are not refunded or must be forfeited by an airline. Should an individual not be able to come to campus, please do consider if they can give their talk or class via tools such as [Zoom Video Conferencing](#).

**Regarding the Curriculum:**

While we are all taking the precautions of staying home when sick, frequent handwashing, substituting handshakes with elbow bumps and head nods, and covering coughs and sneezes with our arms, we must also come up with contingencies to address potential disruptions while achieving our pedagogical goals:

- There may be extended moments when we call on Departments and faculty to work with us to offer students remote learning possibilities (through Zoom, email, conference call or FaceTime).
- There may be extended moments when faculty are unable to come to campus and must teach remotely. (If faculty members or other employees are ill, please consult the illness policy on the Human Resources website: [Certification of Illness](#).) The Provost's Office is working with Information Technology Services to offer workshops on how to use the technology of wired classrooms, your own laptop, and Zoom video and phone conferencing most effectively. We have one workshop scheduled for Friday, March 27 from 12:30-2:00 p.m., and there will be others.
- In the event that we do face disruption during the second half of the semester, we will all be well-served if, as faculty, you can think of ways over the next couple of weeks to bring the term to a successful, good faith conclusion, including a reasonable alternative to traditional proctored exams. This is particularly important for our seniors.
- For those faculty and staff working with students to plan for their summers, please encourage everyone to develop back-up plans.

### **Appreciating individual circumstances**

We encourage everyone to engage in behaviors that maximize individual and collective health and to avoid negative judgement of people who become ill or who choose to stay home while they are ill; people are never at fault for becoming ill, and we do not know who among us may have reason for extra caution. We have developed and will continue to develop plans if students, faculty, or staff develop COVID-19 on campus. As an organization, we are relying on recommendations that are both up to date and informed by scientific data.

As we move through the spring, the College will continue to provide updates about issues as they develop. Don't hesitate to write with questions or concerns to our dedicated email address: [COVID19@swarthmore.edu](mailto:COVID19@swarthmore.edu). (The COVID-19 Planning Group meets three times a week and has plans in place for distance health care, quarantines of students, food delivery, and other issues. We are also discussing possible contingency plans for Honors and for Commencement should those become necessary.)

Wishing you each a healthy and happy start to the spring,  
 Sarah Willie-LeBreton  
 Provost and Dean of the Faculty