CORONAVIRUS UPDATE: Process for reporting suspected and positive COVID-19 cases

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To: Tuskegee University Office of Marketing and Communications <marketing@tuskegee.edu>

Sent on behalf of the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of Human Resources:

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Dear Students and Employees:

Unfortunately, as the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread, we must consider the effects of that spread on members of the Tuskegee University community. To that end, the university is establishing procedures to report suspected and positive cases of COVID-19 so the university can take appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of others.

This process is not designed to single out and embarrass anyone. Instead, your prompt reporting will help engage the appropriate officials and initiate protocols to minimize the spread of the coronavirus to other students, employees, and in turn, their loved ones.

Therefore, all students, faculty and staff shall notify Tuskegee University immediately if they suspect symptoms of or are diagnosed with the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

IF YOU DEVELOP COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

If you begin experiencing one or more COVID-19 symptoms, the CDC recommends you self-quarantine at home immediately and contact the state health department for the state in which you reside for specific instructions on testing protocols. Furthermore, employees should alert their immediate supervisors, and students should contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 334.724.4746.

IF YOU ARE GRANTED A COVID-19 TEST

If your symptoms are severe enough to be granted a COVID-19 test, you must: [1] notify your supervisor (for employees) or the Division of Student Affairs (for students) immediately; [2] begin self-quarantine for the next 14 days or until released by a physician; and [3] report test results to the Office of Human Resources (employees) or the Division of Student Affairs (students) immediately upon confirmation.

Co-workers or others who have been directly exposed to an individual who has been approved for COVID-19 testing must self-quarantine until test results are confirmed. If a positive COVID-19 test is confirmed, the individual(s) must continue to self-quarantine for 7-14 days and follow the return-to-work guidelines below. The 7-14-day self-quarantine begins from the date of most recent exposure to the individual approved for COVID-19 testing.

UPON RECEIPT OF A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST (EMPLOYEES)

Supervisors receiving notification of positive COVID-19 test results will immediately inform their respective vice president or dean with the information. The employee’s immediate work area shall be secured, and no other employees shall be allowed in that workspace until test results are confirmed. Vice presidents or deans will then:
• Notify the Office of Human Resources (Donna Lucas or Dr. Sharron Burnett), which will alert necessary personnel and trace who may have been exposed, as well as work to ensure resources are provided to support the unit’s other employees. This work will be conducted under the auspices of HIPPA to ensure employee health privacy is maintained.
• Coordinate with the Office of Facilities and Capital Projects (Kippy Tate), which will ensure maintenance crews follow CDC-recommended disinfection and sanitation guidelines — after ensuring employees in the immediate work area gather their belongings, vacate the building, and prepare to work remotely (with the assistance of the Office of Information Technology, which will ensure appropriate remote work equipment and support are provided).
• Coordinate with the Tuskegee University Police Department (Chief Patrick Mardis), which will secure the location and keep additional personnel out of the facility.
• Contact Dr. Kimberly Scott, vice president for student affairs, who will coordinate with the Office of the President regarding matters of public/community health and with local public health officials, who will help university administrators determine an appropriate course of action.

UPON RECEIPT OF A POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST (STUDENTS)

Students who receive positive COVID-19 test results should immediately contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 334.724.4746, which will determine response needs based on the student’s residential status and other possible exposure factors as they relate to other members of the university community. That response may include, but will not be limited to, the response measures previously outlined for positive COVID-19 tests involving employees.

RETURNING TO THE FACILITY

All areas wherein a person who has been approved for testing has worked or resided will be cleaned utilizing CDC disinfection and sanitizing guidelines. Employees who had not been in close proximity to reported case can re-enter the building, where they will be encouraged to continue abiding by social distancing guidelines.

RETURNING TO WORK/CAMPUS GUIDELINES AFTER COVID-19 SELF-QUARANTINE

An individual who has remained in at-home isolation due to possible exposure or may have been asked to vacate their workspace during cleaning and sanitizing procedures may return to his/her assigned building after all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

• S/he has had no fever for at least 72 hours (3 full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); AND
• S/he has not developed any COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
• At least 7 days have passed since his/her exposure.

An individual who has remained in at-home isolation due to COVID-19 symptoms may return to his/her assigned building after all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

• S/he has had no fever for at least 72 hours (3 full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); AND
• His/her other symptoms have improved (e.g., cough or shortness of breath have improved); AND
• At least 7 days have passed since his/her symptoms first appeared.
If an individual **tests positive for COVID-19**, s/he may return to his/her assigned building after all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

- S/he no longer has a fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); **AND**
- His/her other symptoms have improved (e.g., cough or shortness of breath have improved); **AND**
- S/he has received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

**SELF-CARE RECOMMENDATIONS**

We realize in our highly social, highly connected times, isolating yourself can lead to feelings of disconnectedness, anxiety and stress. The constant focus on and reporting about the coronavirus pandemic can lead to the same. To counteract this, we advise our students, employees, and everyone for that matter to follow the CDC’s recommendations for coping and self-care during these uncertain times:

- Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories — and that includes social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch and try your best to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others by telephone and video messaging like FaceTime and Skype. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

**If you find your stress and anxiety are reaching dire levels, please call your healthcare provider.**

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