

## **Update from Dean Michael T. Cahill on COVID-19 Response Planning**

March 6, 2020

Our leadership task force continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, particularly in New York State. As of today, there are reports of 44 confirmed cases in the state, and, as you know, this is an evolving situation that changes hourly. The task force is working daily to address concerns, prepare our response in case our community is affected, and develop plans to maximize health and safety and minimize potential disruption to our academic program and other operations. Here is an update on current efforts, plans, and policies.

**Cleaning.** We have significantly increased the frequency and intensity of daily cleanings by our Facilities staff and our outside night cleaners in all our buildings, including all public spaces in Feil Hall. They are particularly focused on disinfecting surfaces that people frequently touch.

**Classes.** At present, we continue to hold classes as regularly scheduled. To prepare for the possibility that an unusual number of individual students must be absent, we are increasing our capacity to record classes. Again, while we prefer students to attend in person if able, we strongly encourage students to stay home if they are sick, and we recognize the potential need to excuse extraordinary absences for illness as warranted.

To prepare for the more extreme possibility that classes cannot be held on site, we are also developing capacity to conduct classes with both instructors and students participating remotely via Zoom or, alternatively, conference call. Both faculty and students should prepare for follow-up messages describing upcoming training sessions that will enable you to acquaint yourselves with Zoom if needed.

**Events.** As with classes, we continue to offer events as scheduled. We will provide updates if the need arises for us to place restrictions on size, scope, or attendees.

**Guests.** We recognize that closures elsewhere may affect the child-care needs of students, faculty, or staff, but we ask that you address these needs by staying home with the child(ren) rather than bringing them to the Law School with you. Please note that, as a general matter, Section II.A.3 of the Student Handbook and Section XIX of the Employee Handbook require prior permission from the Director of Public Safety or an employee's supervisor before bringing minor children to campus. Employees may use sick or personal time to cover any needed leave for these purposes.

**Travel.** We recognize that many of you plan to travel over the upcoming spring break (March 16-20) for professional or leisure purposes. We ask that you use your best judgment to assess the risk of travel based on current conditions at your destination. Current COVID-19 travel warnings can be found [here](#); check regularly for updates if you have travel plans. Note that the New York Department of Health is currently asking — and we will require of all BLS community members or visitors — that those who return from CDC “Level 2” or “Level 3” Health Notice countries self-isolate (remain in their residence and avoid public settings) for 14 days as a precaution. Currently, those countries are China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, and Japan.

**If you are traveling, please let us know where you are going.** So that we may have a better understanding of where members of our community are traveling over spring break and through the end of the semester, we would greatly appreciate information on your travel plans. Please fill out this quick form on BLS Connect [here](#). This is, of course, voluntary, but it would be extremely valuable information for us to have as the national and global situation develops.

**General.** Above all, remain calm. Please be assured that no immediate health risk has yet revealed itself at the Law School, and that we are carefully monitoring the situation and will let you know of any changes. In the meantime, we can all take common-sense precautions: wash hands frequently; avoid close contact (and consider politely declining a handshake) with those who are, or may be, sick; keep hands away from face; keep work and study areas as clean as possible; and stay home if you are ill.

If you have any questions, please contact **Mercedes Ravelo, Director of Public Safety, at 718-780-7942 or at [mercedes.ravelo@brooklaw.edu](mailto:mercedes.ravelo@brooklaw.edu).**