COVID-19 UPDATES: HEALTH + WELLNESS

DEAR STUDENTS

Your good health and wellness is important to us. These are difficult times for you and we want to make sure you have access to all the information the UW can offer in the way of guidance about what it means to:

- stay-at-home
- practice good health prevention measures
- maintain a healthy routine
- stay safe in this environment

The faculty and staff of the School of Art + Art History + Design hope that you will stay well and healthy.

LET'S TALK

- Virtual Let's Talk provides free, drop-in support with experienced therapists from the UW Counseling Center and Hall Health during designated hours.
- Students complete a questionnaire on the Let's Talk website. Once they finish, the website displays a link to participate. They also receive an email with the link. As always, Let's Talk is confidential and secure.
- Let's Talk isn't counseling; it's a way for us to provide low-barrier informal support and resources. To access short-term therapy or groups, students should contact the Counseling Center at 206-543-1240 or Hall Health at 206-543-5030. Services are currently provided through Zoom and/or by phone.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19

This message was sent to undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Washington’s Seattle campus from Vice President for Student Life Denzil Suite on March 24, 2020. Please visit the UW novel coronavirus information webpage for regularly-updated information about COVID-19 and the UW's response.

Dear Students,

The spread of the COVID-19 virus has created some very challenging times here in Seattle and around the world. Information comes at a frenetic pace, and this crisis has altered nearly every aspect of our personal, academic, social, and professional lives. I write today to acknowledge the flexibility, grace, and goodwill you have shown as we navigate remote instruction and campus life, and to provide some information and resources as we continue to navigate during a turbulent time.

Please know that it is natural to feel stress and uncertainty during these times. However, I also want you to know that all of us at the UW are staying abreast of developments and are making every decision with the well-being and education of our students at the forefront as we constantly adapt to this evolving situation.

One important recent development is the stay-at-home order issued by Governor Inslee last night. In light of this, the following information may prove helpful, particularly for those of you who remain on or near campus.

STAY-AT-HOME ORDER: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Essentially, the Governor’s order requires every Washingtonian to stay in their residence unless they need to pursue an essential activity such as going to the grocery store, accessing health care, or for other critical needs. It also bans all gatherings for social, spiritual, and recreational purposes, as well as closes all businesses except essential businesses. However, there are some things you can do:
Grocery stores, gas stations, and pharmacies remain open.
You can still go to restaurants offering take-out.
Feel free to go outside for activities such as walking or exercise, but it is important to keep at least six feet of distance from other people.
Most UW offices remain available to you through remote means.
You may return to your existing residence (e.g. returning to your apartment, residence hall, or fraternity or sorority house after being away); although public health guidance recommends you return to a living situation where you can engage with the fewest people possible and we encourage you to follow that guidance by remaining in your permanent residence, if you can.
- For those who live in the Greek system, please connect in advance with your chapter house to confirm whether it is still open.

Additionally, on the UW's COVID-19 information page, we continue to share important information about community impact, campus response, and health tips. The key health prevention measures have remained consistent, and include:

- Washing hands often with soap and water for a least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer, with 60-95% alcohol, if water is not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and immediately dispose of the used tissue.

**TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF**

Now more than ever, it is critical that you take care of yourself so you can stay well and be there for others. Here is some information from the UW Counseling Center that may prove useful:

**Pay attention to your reactions:** It is normal to experience stress, anger, anxiety, and fear during a crisis. Being aware of your reactions can help you decide what you need to cope with these feelings.

**Be kind to each other:** Remember that COVID-19 doesn't recognize race, nationality, or ethnicity. Wearing a mask does not mean a person is ill. Being compassionate is the best thing we can do for ourselves and our communities.

**Take a break and relax:** There is life outside of the current crisis. Make sure to schedule a break and relax or do things you enjoy such as meditation, listening to music, coloring, etc. Different coping strategies work for different people; use what has worked for you in previous times of stress.

**Maintain a healthy routine:** It is important to maintain your regular schedule for sleeping, eating, studying, working, socializing, etc. Don't use nicotine, alcohol, or other drugs to cope with your stress – these may in fact reduce your body's capacity to heal itself.

**Limit information:** Too much information leads to overload and more stress, so try to limit your exposure to news and information regarding the virus. Choose a reputable and non-sensational news source such as the CDC or King County Public Health.

**Connect with others:** When in distress, you may feel lonely and isolated in what you are going through. You can benefit from connection with others where you can provide and receive support from each other. Talk to your friends and family.

**STAYING SAFE**

We have found that when there are fewer people on or near campus, safety becomes of greater concern. To help keep you safe, we ask that you:

- Be aware of your surroundings and what is going on around you.
- Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.
- Use the buddy system; do not go out at night alone.
- Remove yourself from potentially dangerous situations as soon as possible.

Contact the University of Washington Police Community Engagement Unit at 206-685-1916 for additional
crime prevention information.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

These are distressing times for all of us, and while this all will pass and normalcy will return, the disruption to our norms, routines, and communities will undoubtedly affect each of us at different times and in different ways.

Weathering this crisis will be a marathon, not a sprint, and we are all in it together. Let us harness the challenge of these times by banding together; by checking in on one another and looking for ways we can help and support one another. We confront these extraordinary times together, and it is together that we will work through this, with resilience, compassion, and strength.

Sincerely,

Denzil J. Suite, Vice President for Student Life

CAMPUS RESOURCES

The Counseling Center provides personal counseling, assessment, referral, and crisis intervention services to currently-enrolled students (206-543-1240).

Hall Health Mental Health provides a range of services to assess and treat mental health concerns (206-543-5030).

UW LiveWell provides support and case consultation for students experiencing personal hardship, including academic hardship as the result of extenuating life circumstances (206-543-6085).

Husky Health & Well-Being provides a central online resource for access to health and wellness services across the campus.

SafeCampus is here for you 24/7 if you ever need to privately discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others (206-685-SAFE [7233]).

Forefront Suicide Prevention is focused on reducing suicide by empowering individuals and communities to take sustainable action, championing systemic change, and restoring hope (206-543-1016).

Advisers in Art + Art History + Design are available at uaskart@uw.edu to offer the same information and support that was available to you in their offices in the Art Building.