



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Communications Archive

MAY 2020

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Planning for Fall 2020

Update 5/11/2020

TO: NMSU – Las Cruces Faculty and Staff

As the spring semester draws to a close, we are taking a moment to reflect on the inspiring way our campus community has responded to this crisis. We successfully achieved a massive and rapid change for the good of our students, our colleagues and our community. This was only possible through the flexibility, compassion, and personal responsibility that you have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate every day. For that and so much more, we continue to be deeply grateful.

Looking to the fall semester, we know there is no going *back* to normal. We must think in terms of moving *forward* together, and we must continue to be just as flexible, compassionate and responsible now, as we continue the important work of our land-grant university mission.

As a reminder, you should be collaborating with colleagues and supervisors to plan how to bring your unit back to campus, in phases, and in a way that ensures that your unit is fully able to meet the needs of NMSU. We seek to have a comprehensive draft in place by May 22 in order to set in motion the actions and accommodations necessary to allow a smooth transition into our fall semester. Plan also to pivot when we need to – these plans are not cast in stone, but are a guidepost for us as we navigate the future.

Plans need to be reviewed through your supervisory chain and send to President.Floros@nmsu.edu (mailto:President.Floros@nmsu.edu). While keeping your plans as succinct as possible, please ensure that they address the following key elements:

1. A scope of work for your unit
2. A list of functions that must take place on campus to support our mission and ones that can successfully support our mission through telework
3. A description of the locations for these functions (example: work that takes place at a reception desk or in a single-occupancy office)
4. A plan for how you will decide who works from campus and who teleworks
5. An assessment of COVID-19 exposure risks, like proximity of staff work areas and exposure to others staff members or the public
6. Mitigation plans for each of these risk points, including safety practices such as workspace or schedule modifications, installation of barriers, personal protective equipment recommendations, limiting public access, and training in daily cleaning and disinfection protocols
7. A list of triggering events, such as an employee who reports likely exposure to the COVID-19 virus
8. Continuity of business plan for the unit following a triggering event

Additional guidance can be found in “NMSU Employee and Administrative Protocols for Return to Campus — Fall 2020 (NMSU–Employee–Safety–and–Administrative–Protocols–for–Return–to–Work–5112020.pdf)” and in the attached ACHA Guidelines

([ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf](#)). As you plan, please keep in mind some guiding principles. Your plan should:

- Understand and reduce individuals’ risk at NMSU related to COVID-19
- Support the mission, vision, goals, and values of NMSU LEADS 2025, and
- Protect the health and wellness of the NMSU community and the communities we serve. This means your plan needs to allow for:
 - Appropriate distance from or barriers between community members at all times
 - Hand washing and sanitizing workspaces and public areas as often as needed
 - Requiring that staff stay home when they feel ill
 - Supporting our community members who learn and work from home by facilitating remote participation in the NMSU community
 - Ongoing assessment of worker exposure risk as conditions change, with help from NMSU’s Environmental Health Safety and Risk Management as needed

If you have any questions, please tune in to Thursday’s Town Hall meeting. As always, you can submit questions at <https://president.nmsu.edu/> (<https://president.nmsu.edu/>).

Again, we thank you for your commitment to our mission and your tireless work on behalf of New Mexico - State University.

Dan Arvizu, NMSU Chancellor
Jon Floros, NMSU President



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Wearing a face covering at work

Update 5/19/2020

TO: NMSU – Las Cruces Faculty and Staff

If you have been tuning in to the frequent updates from New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, you are already aware that the May 15 Public Health Order, issued by the New Mexico Department of Health, directs that everyone wear face coverings in public, with exceptions for eating, drinking, or exercising and unless otherwise advised by a health care provider. According to the Governor's press release, a recent study found that if 80 percent of us adopt a simple homemade face covering, we could reduce deaths from COVID-19 by between 17 and 45 percent within two months.

In the workplace, New Mexico State University employees must comply with the Governor's order. As an NMSU employee, this means that you must wear at least a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth whenever you are around people on campus. While this type of face covering does not provide the same protection as a medical mask, this cloth "courtesy face covering" is a way to reduce transmission of the COVID-19 virus. You may provide your own face covering or ask your supervisor for one. More information may be found here: <https://safety.nmsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/72/2020/05/NMSU-EHSRM-Pandemic-Face-Coverings-5-18-2020-.pdf> (<https://safety.nmsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/72/2020/05/NMSU-EHSRM-Pandemic-Face-Coverings-5-18-2020-.pdf>).

Courtesy face coverings are easy to make, and our Bernalillo County FCS 4-H Agent, Nicole Jacobs, has created a video tutorial on sewing your own cloth face covering: <https://youtu.be/bJMefH4mESc> (<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FbJMefH4mESc&data=01%7C01%7Cmchavira%40nmsu.edu%7C3741f4438767434538ff08d7fc3dea2a%7Ca3ec87a89fb84158ba8>). You can also find instructions online for creating a face covering with no sewing required, such as this tutorial available on the New Mexico Department of Health's COVID-19 website: <https://youtu.be/r1FLAYYzj9M> (<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2Fr1FLAYYzj9M&data=01%7C01%7Cmchavira%40nmsu.edu%7C3741f4438767434538ff08d7fc3dea2a%7Ca3ec87a89fb84158ba8>). The Center for Disease Control also has tips on how to make and use a face covering on its website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> (<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fdiy-cloth-face-coverings.html&data=01%7C01%7Cmchavira%40nmsu.edu%7C3741f4438767434538ff08d7fc3dea2a%7Ca3ec87a89fb84158ba8ff11bace1ebaa%7C1&sdata=rvjD>).

Wearing an appropriate face covering is just one aspect of our multi-pronged approach to help protect the safety and health of our Aggie community, along with social distancing measures, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and other tactics designed to reduce the risk of transmission on our campuses and facilities. Personal responsibility—stay home if you are feeling ill, wear your courtesy face covering, wash your hands often, and practice healthy hygiene at all times—is absolutely essential for the protection of our students and one another.

Remember, be courteous! My face covering protects you, and your face covering protects me. Together, we can greatly reduce the spread of the virus in our campus community as we prepare for our students' return in the fall.

Dan Arvizu, NMSU Chancellor

Jon Flores, NMSU President



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Announcing the COVID-19 Rapid Response Team

Update 5/28/2020

TO: NMSU Community

As Aggies, we have accomplished a lot together over the past months as we responded to the coronavirus pandemic. We worked through major changes and kept our institution committed to the health and safety of our students, our employees, our communities, and our state. We are far from done, and today we write to announce progress in our preparations for the start of the next academic year in August.

We have assembled a COVID-19 Rapid Response Team to plan for the return of students, faculty, and staff to our campuses. This team consists of some of NMSU's most knowledgeable experts from across the system. They will develop solutions to challenges regarding teaching and learning, student services, residence life, and campus dining. They will address modifications needed for classrooms, research, human resource practices, safety protocols, and business operations. They will communicate regularly with the NMSU community to ensure you are up to date regarding our progress.

The COVID-19 Rapid Response Team will be led by Vice Chancellor and Strategic Chief Financial Officer Ruth Johnston. In her short time at NMSU, she has already demonstrated her ability to think carefully about both the big picture and the fine details. There is no higher priority in the NMSU System right now than ensuring that we are prepared for the fall term.

Colleges and administrative units have already developed plans for a careful, phased return to campus that will culminate in August with the start of the academic term. These plans allow some employees to continue to work from home and describe ways to reduce exposure to the coronavirus for people who will work from campus. We are currently reviewing these plans, and those that deal with more complex situations will be referred to experts for additional review.

We acknowledge that our plans will need to adapt to changing conditions. While New Mexico has made great strides in flattening the curve of COVID-19 infection, we are months away from a vaccine or a cure. All of our plans are subject to changing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the state of New Mexico.

Although the frequency of Town Hall meetings has decreased for the summer, we will continue to communicate with you regularly. We're setting up a website that will be announced shortly which will provide up-to-date information and a portal for questions. We hope you'll use this site as your go-to resource in the weeks to come.

In the meantime, please submit feedback to President.Floros@nmsu.edu (<mailto:President.Floros@nmsu.edu>) or Chancellor.Arvizu@nmsu.edu (<mailto:Chancellor.Arvizu@nmsu.edu>).

Go Aggies!

Dan Arvizu, NMSU Chancellor
Jon Floros, NMSU President

