

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Novel Coronavirus COVID-19

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### What is a novel coronavirus?

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold.”

#### How does the virus spread?

The CDC reports the virus is spreading from person-to-person: “It’s important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (community spread) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.”

#### Where can I learn more about the novel coronavirus COVID-19?

The [CDC website](#) has numerous resources, including information on how the virus spreads, prevention and treatment info, situation updates and travel alerts. For local information, see the [Pinellas County Health Department](#) site.

#### How can I protect myself from getting sick?

Practice everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
  
- Cover your cough.
- Sneeze into a tissue then throw the tissue away in the trash. Wash your hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Get a flu shot. While it won't protect you against COVID-19, it will help protect you against the flu, which kills up to 61,000 Americans each year.

[For more prevention and treatment information, visit the CDC website.](#)

#### What is social distancing?

[Social distancing](#) is the practice of limiting exposure to communicable viruses by reducing interactions with others, especially those who may have been exposed, those who are exhibiting symptoms of the virus and those with underlying conditions that may compromise their immune systems. In addition,

social distancing, as suggested by the CDC, also includes a recommended distance of six feet from others when possible to help limit possible exposure.

## ACADEMICS

### **I've read that some universities are asking students not to return after Spring Break. What is SPC's position on this?**

The college will extend Spring Break *for students* by two days. Classes will be cancelled for students on Monday and Tuesday, March 16-17.

### **What happens when we return from break?**

The college will move to online instruction for the majority of courses beginning Wednesday, March 18 through March 29. Students should monitor their student email, News Feed and email in MyCourses for further instructions from their professor(s). While the majority of courses will be offered online, **all campuses will remain open. Normal operations will resume Monday, March 30**, unless the situation changes.

### **Which classes will go online and which ones will remain held on campus?**

Most classes will operate online and you will receive more information about this. Select courses/programs – those that require hands-on interaction (such as labs, clinical rotations or internships) will be addressed on an individual basis and students will receive information from their faculty members or Dean specific to these courses by the afternoon of Tuesday, March 17. Students with questions or concerns should contact their professor for guidance.

### **Will I still be able to get help with my classes?**

Faculty will assist you as we navigate this rapidly changing situation. Our highest priority is to maintain normal operations for student services on campuses *including* tutoring, advising, computer labs, registration, financial aid, business offices, etc.

### **Is tutoring available online?**

Yes, we have 24/7 online tutoring services available through a single platform staffed by both Tutor.com and our own [Learning Resources team](#). Find Tutor.com tutorials [in MyCourses](#).

### **Are library research help services available online?**

Yes, SPC's Libraries teams up with other statewide libraries through the [Ask A Librarian platform](#). You can also send an email to our library team through the [Ask A Librarian form](#).

### **What if my class goes online and I don't have access to technology at home?**

In addition to the resources listed above, students who face challenges with access to technology (computers, broadband or Wi-Fi), should contact their professor. They will work with you to resolve these issues or find alternative ways to complete academic assignments. (Please note that you will still be able to access computers on campus through the Learning Resource Centers and libraries.)

I'm enrolled in an 8-week Mod 2 class that is supposed to start Monday, March 16. What do I do? For students in online second 8-week mod classes that were scheduled to begin Monday, March 16, online classes will still be available in MyCourses by the end of Friday, March 13. Any second 8-week

mod classes scheduled to begin Monday, March 16 will resume meeting after the extended Spring Break.

**When is the drop deadline for my 8-week Mod 2 class?**

The last day to drop, receive refund and/or change to audit for second 8-week mod classes will be pushed back two business days to Tuesday, March 24.

## **COLLEGE RESPONSE**

**What is the College doing to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak?**

The College's Emergency Management Council, made up of leaders in all functional areas throughout the College, has been monitoring the outbreak since it was first reported. They have been in contact with local and state health and emergency management officials, as well as the Florida College System and the Florida Department of Education.

**Has anyone from SPC tested positive for the virus?**

As of March 13, 2020, the college has not been contacted by the Department of Health about any individuals testing positive for the virus.

**Is the College aware of any students, faculty or staff who have been exposed to COVID-19?**

Not directly. However, 12 students and 4 instructors in our EMT program attended a conference in Tampa March 4-6. Since then, two non-SPC conference attendees have tested positive for COVID-19; our faculty and staff who attended have exhibited no symptoms. Anyone with direct contact with the infected individuals is self-quarantined out of an abundance of caution, and all SPC members in attendance are monitoring their health.

**Does the College plan on closing campuses or canceling events?**

U.S. and Florida health officials have said that the risk to the general U.S. public continues to remain low.

***The college is moving most classes online through Monday, March 30.*** Students should monitor their student email, News Feed and email in MyCourses for further instructions from their professor(s).

All large-scale college-sponsored events will be canceled, postponed or conducted virtually between Monday, March 16 through Monday, April 13. We will continue to review the situation and provide additional information as needed.

All college athletics events will be canceled through Friday, March 27, effective immediately. At that time, we will review the situation and provide additional information.

**Is it possible college campuses will close? How would that determination be made?**

The coronavirus outbreak is a fluid situation and the College is monitoring it closely. SPC President Dr. Tonjua Williams and her Emergency Management Council are in communication with health officials, the Florida Department of Education, other state colleges and Pinellas County Schools. She or her designee would make any decisions concerning the discontinuation of College functions, cancellation of classes, or cessation of operations, with guidance from the Florida Department of Health, the Pinellas County Health Department and/or the CDC.

**I am a faculty or staff member. If the College closes, will I still get paid?**

The College has a [Payroll Continuation Plan](#) for SPC employees in case of emergencies.

**How would I know the College was closing?**

The Marketing & Strategic Communications Department as well as College leaders are sending updates as needed through email, the College's [Emergency Preparedness website](#) and social media channels. The Pinellas County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) assists in providing information for updates. Specific updates are also being shared with students enrolled in Study Abroad programs and members of our athletic programs.

**What is the College doing to prevent the spread of germs?**

The Facilities Planning and Institutional Services Department is using disinfectant cleaners in all high exposure areas, including restrooms, cafes and areas where people congregate. The department is also regularly checking all hand sanitizing dispensers are full and functional.

**PERSONAL CONCERNS****What do I do if I suspect I have the virus?**

Per the CDC: "Call your healthcare professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19." Additionally, the Florida Department of Health has established a call center number at (866) 779-6121, available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to midnight, as well as an email address for questions at [COVID-19@flhealth.gov](mailto:COVID-19@flhealth.gov). Anyone exhibiting flu-like symptoms, knows they have been exposed to the virus or has tested positive for the virus should NOT come to College campuses or sites.

**What should I do if there is a person exhibiting cold/flu symptoms near me while I am on campus or in a College building?**

SPC leadership is encouraging people exhibiting cold symptoms to stay home and not come to college sites. The CDC advises to avoid close contact with people who are sick and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. They also advise frequent and thorough handwashing and disinfecting of frequently touched objects and surfaces. [For more prevention and treatment information, visit the CDC website.](#)

**Should I wear a mask?**

Only if you are sick, which can help protect others. Wearing a mask will not protect you from getting the virus. In some areas facemasks are in short supply and should be saved for medical personnel and caregivers.

**How can I protect myself from getting sick?**

See above response under the "GENERAL INFORMATION" section.

**TRAVEL****I am traveling over spring break. What should I do after I return?**

Following guidance from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, and other health officials:

- Anyone (students/faculty/staff/etc.) who go on foreign travel, to any country, must self-isolate for 14 days upon return.
- Anyone (students/faculty/staff/etc.) who go on a cruise, anywhere, must self-isolate for 14 days upon return.

Faculty will work with students affected by this request, and supervisors will work with any employees who are impacted.

The CDC and the U.S. State Department [are advising people – particularly those with underlying medical conditions – not to travel by cruise ship.](#)

**What is the status of my study abroad trip?**

The SPC Center for International Programs is monitoring travel advisories and updates provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of State and the World Health Organization. Students will be contacted directly by email if their study abroad trip is affected by coronavirus reports. Thus far, spring trips to Japan and Italy are on hold. Those who planned to take part in the aforementioned trips have received communications directly from the SPC Center for International Programs.

***\*Last updated Friday, March 13, 2020, 1 p.m.***