

Transcript Discussion on Coronavirus concerns ([Live Stream time Code: 12:30](#))
Presented by Dean Jeff Landry Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Tommy Keith: Alright, so now I'm going to let Jeff present about coronavirus and answer some of the concerns you guys had about what's going to happen when we get back to campus.

Jeff Landry: Hi everybody, I thank you for inviting me. Hopefully I'll be helpful to some of your concerns. I got a list of questions that I think were sent to me, so I'm happy to go through that list and then answer any other questions that you may have. But maybe I'll start off with just a quick overview of what's been going on for the past couple of weeks.

So the HERT team, does anybody know what the HERT Team is? Who's heard of the HERT Team? Every hand went up. I'm pleased. So the HERT Team, the Hamilton Emergency Response Team, we respond to any type of crisis on campus. We've been doing a lot of work around the virus. We've been meeting twice a week and emailing on the off days and trying to get a plan together, right? Like what we are going to do. And some of the early things that we're doing are a lot more cleaning and disinfecting. You may have seen that in the email that's gone out. So, Facilities Management has been doing an incredible amount of work. So, starting at three o'clock in the morning, every morning, they go through and disinfect all the high traffic areas, they disinfect all the touch points, so door knobs and handles and everything else. So, they're doing a great job and they're trying to keep the campus disinfected.

So, the HERT Team and the senior staff of the college, all the vice presidents, are spending a lot of time trying to plan what we're going to do; what we're going to move to, and what our action items should be. So we've made a decision to follow CDC guidelines, you've seen that in a lot of the emails. That's our plan at the moment. So, whatever the CDC, or the New York State Department of Health, or the Oneida County Health Department recommend, then we are following that recommendation.

So, we haven't canceled anything, yet. All trips and travel, with the exception of those level three countries, I'll get to that in a second, we're allowing to happen. Spring break trips, we're allowing to happen. But, there's some caution built into that, and I'll get to that in a second. Let me go through the list of questions that you folks submitted. I'll answer those questions, then we can go to the room for questions. Does that work?

Will students have to report their travel records for spring break? If so, what is the process?

So, we're toying with that. We're thinking about whether or not we want to create a google sheet for that, so students can tell us where they're going to. The only thing we'd really want to do with that sheet is to be able to give resources should something change while you're away, right. So, what we're trying to guard against is the student's who say "I'm going to be going abroad for the two week, I'm going to Paris for a week." And, Paris, right now, is a level 2, so what happens when Paris becomes a level 3 while you're there, right? A lot of things will kick in. If we know you're in Paris, if we can check and say "oh, that student's there and trying to come back," we can reach out and give you some resources about what's going to happen. So, we're thinking of putting that in place. And that decision will be made tomorrow [3/10/20] or the next day [3/11/20].

What countries can students not travel to?

So, Italy, South Korea, Iran, and China, right now. It looks like Japan, at any point could go to a level 3. So, if you're going to Japan for spring break, you may want to think twice about that. And, we are certainly in a lot of conversation with the students that are scheduled to study abroad in Japan this semester.

Interestingly enough, and I didn't know this, Japan hasn't started yet, their semester. So the students who are supposed to be studying there are still here in the United States, so we're working closely with them.

Is the registrar helping abroad students that got sent home find online summer classes?

So, this is a tricky one. So Hamilton owns three abroad programs. We own a program in China, a program in France, and a program in Spain. So, we're responsible for those curricula. All the other study abroad programs happen either through other colleges, or other programs. So, it'll be those colleges that would help students find those credits. So, as of now, the programs are closing, for instance, in Italy. I think all the schools, except for one, have made their courses available online. Don't quote me, I can find out for you. I think one program just canceled, and gave their money back. The downside of that is that the students lost those credits. But, every other program has gone online and is allowing students to finish the program from home.

How does self-quarantine work if you live in a double or quad?

You will not self-quarantine if you live in a double or quad. So, quarantine is really going to be assigned through the Department of Health. We're not going to quarantine you, we're not going to tell you, you need to be quarantined. If you come back from a region, a level 3 region, the local health department is going to tell you that you need to quarantine, and they'll be in touch with you. So what we have to do now is all students who come back from abroad from those level three areas, we have to provide the Oneida County Health Department with contact information to those students. So, they'll reach out to the students and give them information and instructions.

Where it gets weird, or complicated, is: if you're in New York state, so if your home is in New York, you have to be quarantined for 14 days if you come back from one of those countries at level 3. Other states aren't making that requirement. So if you live in, say, Texas, they have different requirements. So, what will happen is, the Oneida County Health Department will call the health department in your county where home is, and they will let them know that you're coming to that area.

So, quarantine doesn't happen everywhere, it happens in New York state. And it likely won't happen on campus. We'd likely send you home. If you can't get home, we'll try to set up something for you on campus to quarantine in. For specifics, quarantines have to be in a single, has to have a private bathroom, and we have to have the ability to get your resources. We have to get you food, and somebody will have to check on you multiple times a day, so it's a complicated process. But, you're not going to self-quarantine yourselves, and we're not going to tell you "you must quarantine yourselves."

If an outbreak does start on campus, how will we even know it's coronavirus, and not the flu? Does the school have testing kits or is the nearest in a hospital?

So, that's a great question. Coronavirus has some pretty specific symptoms. It's a cough. It's a fever. Those two things have to happen for coronavirus. Unlike the flu or unlike the cold, it's not nasal. So you're not going to have the stuffy nose or the drippy nose. You'll have a cough and you'll have a fever. So, the Health Center will likely be the first point of contact after the EMTs, and they'll have their protocols. They're gonna check your symptoms, they're going to ask you where you've traveled. If you've traveled, if you've come into contact with anyone who might have this virus, so they'll go through their protocols.

If something pops and goes "whelp, this looks like it could be a case of coronavirus," they'll call an ambulance, and they'll call the Oneida County health Department and get their assistance on how to handle it. So you're not going to be treated at the Health Center, you're going to be treated at a hospital by the staff there, does that make sense?

Will students have to pay for their own testing?

No. That would come under your insurance. That'll come as a result of a doctor ordering that prescription for that test. Or it will come as a result of you visiting that hospital and getting tested, so it'll be covered by insurance.

If the virus spreads on the Hamilton campus, will we have online classes? How will the college respond?

So, we're trying to set that up now. So, we're working with LITS. They're doing a great job trying to figure out how we can offer all of our courses online. I think they have a plan for that. So Blackboard, the system you folks use, is really built for that. And systems like Skype or Zoom could be used to deliver those courses. Where it gets tricky, is labs. It's hard to do a lab online. Dance classes, and other performance-type classes. Art classes might be tricky. But those professors are trying to work through what they are offering and see how they can go online.

How is the college prepared if the virus is still a threat around the time of Senior Week and/or Commencement?

So, we have not restricted any events yet. We are absolutely thinking about what that's going to look like should there be a problem around graduation time, around Senior Week, around Class and Charter Concert Day, around all of these big events, what will we do. We'd have to think about canceling if need be. We'd have to think about doing it virtually. We'd have to think about doing it in a different space. So, there's all kinds of options that we're considering, and they're all on the table at this point.

Who do students contact if they are quarantined somewhere off campus?

Again, that's the whole quarantine question. That would have to be through the health department, so we would have to be aware of what's going on, so we would help you set that up.

What we would like to do, if possible, if you have to be quarantined, is send you home. It's going to be more comfortable for you. It's going to be easier for us on campus and the Health Department. Obviously, a lot of you can't get home easily. If someone was suspected of the virus, we're not going to put you on a plane to fly to California, or somewhere overseas. So we would work with you then to get you quarantined somewhere around here.

Some other colleges in the U.S. have declared a state of emergency that allows for a bunch of different things.

So a little confusion there, colleges aren't declaring a state of emergency. States are declaring a state of emergency. So, Florida, Maryland, California, Washington, one or two others, New York, has declared a state of emergency. All that does is it allows the state to get extra funding and it allows the state to get funding quicker. Alright, so it doesn't really put any restrictions in place, it doesn't really change anything, it's just a vehicle to get money from the state governments. So, that won't change anything for us. And as I said, New York is currently in a state of emergency, it's just helping them get funding.

If someone has any flu symptoms, should we go get tested?

Sure. If you think you have the flu, call the Health Center, give them your symptoms and they can help you figure out what to do. Again, they're going to go through their protocol and ask those questions to determine is it the flu? Is it a cold? Is it coronavirus? Is it something else? They'll help you sort that out. *Here's a big takeaway:* make sure you call and don't walk in because it's likely that the Health Center's going to get to a point where they're going to turn you away. They don't want sick people in the Health Center getting other people sick. So, it's a whole lot easier to call them, use that triage line, talk to the nurses there. They'll go through that protocol online. They'll make that decision at that point and they'll say "come on in, we need to see you." or "do X, Y, or Z". So make sure that you're calling rather than walking in.

Have any of the sports training sessions been canceled?

Not at this point. We just talked about that today. So none of the spring break trips are canceled as of today. That could change any day. We're trying to stay on top of other areas in other states and really trying to get a feel from the students and the families of what they want to do. So there was an email that went out today from HERT talking about those trips and those activities saying that they're not required and John Hinde had some conversations with his coaches and said "if a student does not want to go on this trip because they do not feel that it's safe to go on this trip, you may not hold that against them or do anything about their playing time." So students can opt out.

The same for other types of trips, AXB trips, same thing if you want to opt out. We can certainly help you get out of that trip. If there's money, try and help you get that money back. So, we're not canceling all the trips, yet. But we are allowing students to back out.

That was the last of the questions that I had, I'm sure you folks have questions.

Connie Lorente '20:

I have a question about the Madrid and Paris programs. Will the study abroad, or Hamilton, cancel them? When? If? Probably when Spain and France get to level 3.

Dean Landry:

Yes, that's a great question. So Spain, France, and we're also talking to New York and DC, those programs as well. But France and Spain, in particular, they're level 2 at this point. France has seen a large uptick in cases. I think that there are around 2,000 cases now. We're

talking to those folks every day. Every day we're having conversations with the folks over in France. People are in pretty good spirits. They're feeling ok about what's going on. So it's the same process, we're going to monitor.

So, what happened in France yesterday, the French government changed their internal status to a level 3. It means nothing to the CDC, but it is similar to them going to a state of emergency. So the French government said, "we are in this place where we need extra funding so they're emergency response." The CDC has them at a level 2. If they go to level 3, then we will close and bring them home and go through the same process of allowing students to finish their courses online. Both France and Spain have worked out really nice backup plans. So if they have to go online, they feel pretty comfortable that they can offer all the courses online.

Ashley Garcia '22:

I wanted to know, I know that you, as of right now, are not canceling the trips for athletes. But, is there a possibility that they could be canceled while they're there. So, what would we do?

Dean Landry:

Another good question. Can the trips be canceled while they're there? Sure. So, I think if there's a big outbreak in an area where the teams are, we could say, "we're taking you home," absolutely. When we're looking at the cases in Florida, right now, they're not where our teams are going. All of our teams except for rowing are going to Florida. The rowing team is going to South Carolina, and, again, so far there are no cases in those areas. But, if a lot of cases popped up, I assume that we could make the decision to bring them home quicker than we anticipated.

Caroline Paulson '21:

I believe Amherst College just went online, they just canceled classes. Is that a conversation happening within the NESCACs? And will that impact our decision at all?

Dean Landry:

Yeah, schools are doing a lot of different things, I am sure that you've seen this on the news. So there are a handful of schools, and it's growing. There are five right now in New York state, that have canceled classes and they're only offering online classes. And for the life of me I cannot figure that out. They're not sending students home. So you're living in a residence hall, you're eating in a dining hall, you're hanging out and doing your thing, but you can't go to class? It doesn't seem like it's mitigating anything. So five schools have gone that route. We're not there, we're not going to do that anytime soon.

The question would be, whether we close a semester early and send you home and offer classes online. We certainly have been talking about that possibility, should we get there.

Jenny Tran '22:

Are students responsible for reporting if they are quarantined? And to that extent, who should they contact from the college?

Dean Landry:

Hopefully we would know that already. But you raise an interesting point. If a student decides that they're going to go to Italy over spring break even though its a level three country and then they decide to come back, when you get to customs, you'll likely be told that you can't come in unless you are quarantined. So that would be really helpful if a student told us where they were and if they will be out for two weeks. For a couple reasons. We should know if a student is being tested and if they do have the virus. But we also should know if you're going to miss two weeks of class. So absolutely let us know. Let us know if you have to be in quarantine and we will help set up to make sure that you're completing your work on time.

Jenny Tran '22:

Who do they send an email to?

Dean Landry:

Dean of Students Office.

Stephanie Wu '21:

If a student is suspected of having the virus, then would they be quarantined on campus?

Dean Landry:

So if you are suspected of having the virus, you will probably be quarantined on campus. And you'll likely be quarantined until you're told that you don't have it. Or, if you test positive and you do have it, we'll keep you on here. Or if possible then we will send you home. What we're not going to do is put you on a plane, put you on a train or something like that. If your parents can come and pick you up then we would prefer that and have them take you home.

Stephanie Wu '21:

So, what if there's something at home that means that you can't go home, like someone has a compromised immune system?

Dean Landry:

So if home is not a great place to go for a variety of reasons, people that you live with have compromised immune systems, is there a way to stay on campus? Of course, we'll figure it out. We'll figure out a way to do it and help students out, make sure that students stay healthy and that everyone else does as well.

Nyaari Kothiya '23:

So I have a question: if you're on a spring break trip from Hamilton, like you're on a sports team or something like an AXB trip, and in the middle of the trip Hamilton decides to go online and not let students come back on campus, how would that work for students that are off campus?

Dean Landry:

Yeah, so sneak preview: you're going to get an email tomorrow from HERT that says that you should consider, when you go away for spring break, bringing the materials that you need in

case that should happen. I think it's unlikely that we would close the campus while you're away. Odds are, things will be okay while you're away, it's when you come back, right, and you bring your stuff back with you. However, if something should happen and we decide that we will offer online only classes, then the email is going to recommend that you take the materials with you when you go away for spring break.

Nyaari Kothiya '23:

Follow up. You said that's a very unlikely situation. But if that happens, then what happens to the students that did go home and decided to stay on campus.

Dean Landry:

Yeah, so with all the students that are still here, we would have to make arrangements to send them somewhere.

Kate Everett '20:

What would need to happen for the school to shut down during break? Would the WHO have to declare a pandemic, would there have to be a certain amount of cases or?

Dean Landry:

I think the number of cases. We're really really limited in our quarantine space because it's so specific. Single room with a private bathroom. So there's a couple things. We don't have any of those open in the residence halls. So we could use Bristol, the spaces on the fourth floor. Those are private rooms with bathrooms. So when it gets to a point when we can't accommodate it is when we get to make those decisions. So imagine two quads or three quads with students that get infected. That's a hard thing to do to quarantine them, or at least isolate them for a while. So I think that it's a numbers game. When we get to the point where we can't quarantine or isolate enough people, then we will have to make that decision

Tatum Barclay '22:

So my question is, we don't really understand how long coronavirus is going to last. So are there any discussion about any long term plans such as going into next fall for what to do with students who have already turned in their leave of absence forms for going abroad. I've been alerted by my program saying that at this moment the program is still continuing, but will update me if it gets canceled. So what is the protocol for, lets say, if my program gets canceled in July, but I have not registered for housing or classes?

Dean Landry:

Yeah, so we're trying to play out all these different scenarios. So what if this is a really long term virus and many many people have it in this area, can we open for the fall semesters/ if we can't, then we're going to have to build for that. We'll have to figure out if we can't open for the fall, or open late for the fall. That becomes a very significant problem. But to your point, what happens if during the summer or late spring, this is continuing and my abroad program is canceled, but Hamilton is open? That happens every now and then anyway. Students change their mind or students decide not to go abroad. And we work with those students to get housing and change their classes. So we would work with that group of students to make sure that they

get housing and get in the classes that they need. So it would take some leg work, but we would certainly get students housing and in classes.

Julian Perricone '20:

My question is basically, are these same precautions being taken for faculty and staff, specifically with the travel registry and quarantine?

Dean Landry:

Yeah, so the travel registry, they should be working with their supervisor. So for administrators and staff, they're working with their supervisors for travel or business purposes. So supervisors are making those decisions. So for example, I know some supervisors have canceled trips to Seattle, because I know that's a hot spot in a state. So they've canceled those trips. So supervisors should know where their employees are going for business and supervisors should be talking about if their employees are taking leisure travel. Again, they'll have those conversations for you, making sure they're safe.

Lóri Fejes '22:

So if the college were to move all classes online, and/or if the college were entirely closed down, then how would that change the visa status of international students. So how do we go home, if we can afford to fly home? What happens?

Dean Landry:

So, closing the college is the absolute last resort for a lot of reasons including that. We were talking about that the other day, this is obviously a global problem, but this is also a regional problem. So if Hamilton closes, so does Utica College, so does Syracuse, so does Colgate, so we're talking about is just a nightmare of sending students home and a nightmare of sending students where they're going. That is everybody's last resort, but if we have to do it then we have to do it. We'll figure out how to get students to the airport and where they need to be.

What will be tricky is what if students are sick? And they're in quarantine and they're closed down. Then what do we do with them? So, that would be the tricky part. There's a lot of planning that has to happen that we're thinking about and we're thinking about it

Lóri Fejes '22:

So would online classes allow us to stay on campus because we have nowhere else to go?

Dean Landry:

Yeah, so the whole online, there's some fairly significant restrictions to online teaching that have been relaxed over the past few days. We were talking about one of the issues is students who are international students who are but are currently abroad, then can they come back on their visa and take classes. And up until the other day, it was no. they can only take one online course and the rest have to be in a classroom setting. That just changed a couple days ago because of all this. So it's the same thing. The State Department is loosening up the regulations for visas allowing students to change or their visa or do different things. And it's changing daily.

So Allen Harrison is the Dean's office. He's on top of it. He works with international students. So he's tracking visas every day

Matt Knowlton '21:

So back to this thing about the worst case scenario: we don't come back from spring break, we're taking online classes. What does that look like for eventually moving out of dorm rooms? Or would we have kids to come back after at graduation or post graduation to move out for the next semester? I know that it's far away.

Dean Landry:

It's not far away. It's only a few weeks away, potentially. That would be complicated, because if we are closing the campus, that means we have cases on campus. And we do not want students coming back if there are cases on campus. So we would have to make arrangements for students to get their stuff once those cases clear up. So it might be a little bit of time before students can come back and get their things. Again, such a worst case scenario. We hope we don't get there.

Tatum Barclay:

On that point because I think that's the worst case scenario and the one that's on everybody's minds right now. So as schools have been doing it, they've been doing it different ways. So NYU has been testing out online classes for a period of time after spring break, so it was almost just like their spring break was extended. Versus Amherst, which is just shutting down the school entirely and going straight into online. So do you think Hamilton will consider just extending the spring break and testing out online. Or if it gets to that worst case scenario where they just declare that it's going to be closed and straight to online.

Dean Landry:

I do not know. We have not talked about those options yet...

Before I go, we're going to try to do updates more often. Our goal is to send out at least a couple updates a week, so please check your email.