



Statement from the Graduate Professional Council and the Missouri International Student Council concerning COVID-19

As the world deals with the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), UM System President Mun Choi announced Friday that in-person classes were suspended, and all class will be held remotely for all four UM System campus through the end of the semester. Continuous coverage from the media often lead to different and varied information about COVID-19 and it is hard for many of us to know how to respond, especially for our international students and their families.

Historically, infectious diseases have generated racist discourse that blames victim populations for the perceived threat. The responses to this outbreak of the COVID-19 have been no different. We are hearing about incidents in which the virus is referred to as the “Chinese” virus, the yellow peril, and that those who appear to be of Asian descent and students who wear masks for various reasons are being stigmatized, subjected to racist, xenophobic jokes and remarks, and excluded by those fearful of contracting the virus.

Many of our students, staff, and faculty are concerned about family both at home and abroad. They are experiencing severe traumatic stress regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, with international students facing concerns regarding family back home and constant fears around the ability to return home due to travel bans. These individuals may also end up facing painful discrimination that can result in physical, emotional, and economic consequences for them. These developments are causing harm to many on our campus and add to the stress already present in our competitive academic environments. With holding classes remotely, it is inevitable for international students to feel isolated and alone.

We, the GPC International Student Affairs Committee (GPC-ISAC) on behalf of the Graduate Professional Council along with the Missouri International Student Council (MISC) and the Missouri Students Association (MSA), want to offer our condolences, express our concerns, and to encourage our community to stand strong together against stress during the time of ever-evolving public health emergency.

Below are some tips and resources about what we can do to be prepared and work together to continue to build a strong community of support for all students and their families.

With our warmest regards,

Graduate Professional Council - International Student Affairs Committee
Missouri International Student Council
Missouri Students Association



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General Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC is a federal agency operating under the Department of Health and Human Services and is the leading national public health institute of the United States. They provided up-to-date and reliable information through [CDC website](#) for COVID-19 and resources for [managing anxiety and stress](#).

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) Hotline: 877-435-8411

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) activated a statewide public hotline for citizens or providers needing guidance regarding the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. The hotline is being operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Aetna

[Aetna will waive co-pays for all diagnostic testing related to COVID-19](#). This policy will cover the cost of physician-ordered testing for patients who meet CDC guidelines. Aetna will waive the member costs associated with diagnostic testing at any authorized location for all Commercial, Medicare and Medicaid lines of business.

MU Resources

[MU Alert](#)

The official University of Missouri emergency alert website. Check the website for updates on the campus including university notifications regarding COVID-19.

[MU International Center](#)

The International Center provides updates for international students regarding COVID-19, see [the website](#) for more information.

MU Counseling Center

MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health services at no additional cost to Mizzou students. Crisis and consultation services are available 24 hours per day by calling 572-882-6601. For more information, please refer to [MU Counseling Center website](#).



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MU Health Care: Video Visits

Video visits is the service provided by the MU Health Care, which provides a faster, easier way to see a health care provider. With video visits, you can see one anytime from your smartphone, tablet or computer. It is easy to use, private and secure. It's free to enroll, and visits cost \$10, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, please refer to [MU Health Care webpage](#).

Student Health and Wellbeing

Noon meditation: Student Health and Well-Being is offering noon meditation 12:00-12:30 every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the remainder of the semester. Participate at <https://umsystem.zoom.us/j/939301627>

Well-Being Workshops to help you sleep better, improve mood, and learn to use Sanvello for self care are available to you. [Check out available workshops and register online](#).

Others

Tips: Minimizing bias-based harm to students

1. Update accurate information and scientific facts about COVID-19 through trusted sources, namely the Center of Disease Control (CDC); World Health Organization (WHO), and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Information shared by other sources may be unverified and conflicting.
2. Acknowledge the fear, confusion, panic or uncertainty that you and people around you may experience. It is completely normal to have such feelings.
3. Learn and share verified information about the real risks and the basic steps to protect ourselves (including limiting access to the news, internet, and social media)
4. Avoid travelling or any non-essential activities.

Sanvello

Sanvello is a phone app that can help you develop skills and habits to improve mood, decrease anxiety, and enjoy your best mental health. Download the app on the app store, iTunes, or Google Play, and register an account using your university email.