

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 13, 2009
To: University of Arizona Deans, Department Heads and Faculty
From: Meredith Hay, Executive Vice President and Provost
Subject: Class Attendance During A Flu Outbreak

Given the resurgence of the H1N1 pandemic influenza virus that seems to be occurring early this fall semester, I am asking for your assistance with several interventions that may help to mitigate the impact of this pandemic flu on the UA campus community.

The first is to communicate to your students the importance of staying home if they become ill with flu symptoms. They should remain at home until they are free of a fever for 24 hours. The following is a sample of a message that could be placed in the syllabus or communicated to the students in other ways:

“If you become ill with the flu, do not come to class until you have had no fever for 24 hours. You are responsible for contacting me via email or phone as soon as you can to let me know you are ill. You are also responsible for any work missed while you are ill including assignments and exams.”

The following has been communicated to UA students in a letter regarding H1N1 from the Executive Director of the Campus Health Service that has been distributed electronically:

“Academic departments will also be asked to accommodate students who need to be out of classes due to influenza and to help them stay connected and up-to-date on their course work through phone, internet and email communications. If students become ill with the flu, it will be their responsibility to initiate and maintain communications with their instructors.”

The second intervention we need your assistance with is to request that during this flu season, instructors not require a note from Campus Health or the student’s doctor if their students miss class due to illness. The rationale for this request during this pandemic flu outbreak includes:

1. Campus Health is already seeing a significant increase in demand for care and anticipates this will continue through the coming weeks and months. They also anticipate some increase in staff absenteeism due to illness that will strain Campus Health’s capacity to see patients.
2. Most students who are ill with the flu can be managed through rest and self care. In order to decrease exposure to others, students with flu symptoms are being encouraged to stay home and not go to the clinic unless they are having severe symptoms.

3. Experience at Campus Health has shown that students needing notes generally come in when they are feeling well or much less ill and therefore at a point when they don't need to see a doctor. In that circumstance, they are using staff resources that could be applied to more severely ill students.

Campus Health has agreed to work with students and instructors to provide a doctor's note in the event of a missed exam due to illness if Campus Health can verify that the illness occurred.

Finally, the same recommendation on class attendance made above applies to faculty and teaching assistants who become ill with the flu. Please follow this advice for the sake of your health as well as the health of your colleagues, coworkers and students.

Your assistance with encouraging instructors to honor these requests would be greatly appreciated and will help us to decrease the impact of the pandemic flu on the overall functioning of the UA campus community this fall and winter. Thank you.