



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 20:12

Date: March 11, 2020

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

CAUT is actively monitoring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global outbreak. The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) (PHAC) has currently assessed the risk as low for Canadians. However, the situation is developing rapidly and as the outbreak becomes an increasingly global threat, colleges and universities have been developing preventative plans in the event of a serious local emergence of the virus. As we are witnessing in other jurisdictions, such infection control plans may include closures, provisions for online instruction, and the cancellation of conferences, study abroad programs, and other campus events. It is critical that academic staff associations be actively involved in the development of these institutional response plans, as decisions taken will have an impact on the curriculum, methods of instruction, and other educational matters affecting the work of academic staff.

Academic staff associations should ensure that administrations are prepared to respond appropriately to protect staff and students in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19. To assist with this, the World Health Organization has produced an [information sheet](#) on steps to take in preparing workplaces for possible outbreaks.

With respect to upcoming CAUT events, including April Council, we are proceeding as scheduled at this time. As of today, there are no confirmed or presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in Ottawa. However, we are asking attendees to take appropriate cautionary measures. **If you have recently visited regions where an [outbreak is occurring](#), or have been on a cruise ship, you are requested to self-quarantine for 14 days following your return to Canada.** All travellers returning to Canada from other regions should monitor their health for 14 days and contact public health authorities if they become ill.

To reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus and other infections, PHAC recommends that you:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands with soap

- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or into your arm, not your hand
- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care centres if you are sick
- Get your flu shot if you haven't already as the flu virus is still circulating in Canada

CAUT will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the advice of PHAC and [Ottawa Public Health](#). We will provide further updates as they become available.