



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

College of Engineering



College of Engineering, Overview of Key (H1N1) Pandemic Roles and Responsibilities, October, 2009

This document has been prepared by the Engineering Pandemic Management Team for the College on the basis of material provided by the University's Crisis Operations Team. It is intended for everyone in the College community, including students, instructors, support staff, department heads, and deans. It is a guide only for pandemic response purposes; it is expected that each person and unit will develop specific guidelines and/or practices for their particular activities.

There are two aspects to addressing the potential H1N1 flu pandemic that may be upon us in the fall of 2009. One aspect is focused on prevention of the pandemic and/or mitigation of its spread, while the other aspect is focused on dealing with the occurrence of the pandemic itself. In the latter case, there are issues of academic impacts, business operations impacts, and so on. This document is intended to provide some guidance with respect to both aspects of the pandemic issue, albeit the major focus is on managing the academic impacts of a pandemic.

From an operations perspective, all persons involved in planning for a possible flu pandemic (i.e., all of us!) should bear in mind the need for contingency planning and/or the need for incorporating redundancy, where possible, into their operations. In this respect, we are all responsible to do our best to ensure that operations continue with the least interruption possible. All persons, including students, should take seriously the matters of contingency planning, self-protection and protection of others.

Crisis Management for Pandemic Response

The College has implemented a pandemic response team structure that is essentially a simplified version of that put in place at the University level. The College team is referred to as the Engineering Pandemic Management Team (EPMT).

Key Points for Pandemic Response

- Practice personal preparedness to prevent or otherwise mitigate the spread of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)
- If you are experiencing ILI symptoms, PLEASE STAY HOME! By staying home, you isolate the risk that you would otherwise impose on your colleagues and reduce your recovery time by resting
- Participate in developing or updating contingency plans that may be used in the event of your absence from the workplace and/or classroom
- Unless otherwise warranted, it will be business as usual in the College; in the event of a pandemic, reasonable flexibility will be exercised with respect to many official deadlines

Engineering Pandemic Management Team (EPMT)

Team Leader: Jim Kells (5340)
Members: Glen Hauser (1403)
Henry Berg (4650)
Don Bergstrom (5454)
Jit Sharma (7049)
Colleen Teague (5289)
University contacts: David Hannah (8710), Crisis Management Team
Nowell Seaman (8788), Crisis Operations Team

EPMT duties include:

- making College-level decisions during crisis and/or to intervene to prevent crisis
- providing direction to College personnel in response to the pandemic preparedness and communicating major policy decisions in respect of same
- advising the College community of key issues and emerging risks
- consulting, determining and executing operational response of the institution to the pandemic, based on guidance and advice from the UofS Crisis Operations Team (COT).
- implementing mechanisms to coordinate decisions and actions in academic and administrative units within the College
- liaising with the Local Safety Committee
- communicating to the Dean regarding major changes to the University's academic schedule
- providing support to units regarding pandemic planning within the College
- serving as a liaison group to the University's Crisis Management and Crisis Operations teams

Other Contact(s):

- General pandemic inquiries: flu_info@usask.ca
- University pandemic website: www.usask.ca/pandemic
- College pandemic website: www.engr.usask.ca/h1n1

Personal Preparedness (Individual)

Individuals are responsible for practicing good infection prevention behaviours, which include:

- washing hands frequently
- coughing and sneezing into elbow/sleeve rather than hand
- staying home if sick with ILI (fever and cough)
- minimizing physical contact with others (e.g., handshaking, maintaining a safe distance, etc.)
- visiting the web page of the College (www.engr.usask.ca/h1n1) and University (www.usask.ca/pandemic) for information and updates on pandemic preparedness
- using personal hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content for situations where hand-washing is not possible
- receiving H1N1 vaccination (highly recommended)
- keeping hands away from face

- taking particular precaution when known to be in contact with often highly-contaminated surfaces (e.g., door handles, computer keyboards/mice, etc.)

Student (undergraduate)

Undergraduate students will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- providing timely notification to your course instructors if you are away due to ILI
- filling out the “Student Declaration of Absence due to Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Form” and delivering it to the course instructor(s) for which a course requirement has been missed after returning from being away due to ILI symptoms; this form can be found on the University and College web pages
- visiting the College website for information and updates on the pandemic situation, including information on class cancellations
- following the usual procedures for deferred exams
- developing a “buddy” system for intervening for when you may be away due to ILI (e.g., note-taking, picking up handouts, etc.)
- taking all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of ILI on academic performance in spite of increased flexibility being exercised by the instructor
- not consuming food or drink in the computer labs

Student (graduate)

Graduate students will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- providing timely notification to your supervisor and course instructors if you are away due to ILI
- visiting the College website for information and updates on the pandemic situation, including information on class cancellations
- developing a “buddy” system for intervening for when you may be away due to ILI (e.g., note-taking, picking up handouts, etc.)
- taking all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of ILI on academic performance in spite of increased flexibility being exercised by the instructor
- not consuming food or drink in the computer labs

Instructor

Instructors will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- passing on to students University communications re: pandemic information and the University’s plans and responses, reinforcing key messages where appropriate (e.g., staying home if one has flu-like symptoms) and referencing the University’s pandemic website www.usask.ca/pandemic
- stressing the purpose and importance to students of the “Student Declaration of Absence due to Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Form” and receiving such forms from students for consideration as you would with a doctor’s note (i.e., it is a surrogate for a medical note); this form can be found on the College and University websites
- being as flexible as possible in respect of attendance requirements and not requiring a medical note if a student is absent to a self-declared ILI

- focusing on the delivery of core course material as soon as possible within the term prior to any significant development of ILI
- providing alternate instructional methods (on-line delivery, independent readings, etc.) to the extent possible and as appropriate
- extending course assignment deadlines where possible and/or appropriate
- determining whether the nature of course work, the weighting and timing of assignments, or any other aspect of a course outline should be altered (in consultation with department head) and communicating this to students
- monitoring and reporting levels of student absenteeism (for specified “sentinel” classes only)
- in conjunction with department head, canceling individual classes if warranted (and informing students and EPMT of same)
- notifying graduate students of any changes to the lecture schedule and/or other scheduled presentations
- placing on file in the home department a copy of the final exam(s) for undergraduate course(s) for which the instructor is responsible no less than two weeks in advance of the final exam date
- assisting the department head with developing a “buddy” system for intervening when an instructor is away due to ILI
- providing timely notification to the department head or designate if you are away due to ILI

Support Staff (Lab Techs)

Support staff (lab techs) will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- assisting the instructor and department head with developing a “buddy” system for intervening when a lab technician is away due to ILI
- assisting the department head with establishing priority activities to best maintain departmental operations in the event of reduced staffing levels
- developing or updating procedures manuals for various departmental operations so as to enhance staffing flexibilities
- developing or updating an operations manual for lab setups for individual courses that others might use if required
- providing timely notification to the department head or designate if you are away due to ILI

Support Staff (Clerical)

Support staff (clerical) will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- assisting the department head with developing a “buddy” system for intervening when a clerical staff member is away due to ILI
- assisting the department head with establishing priority activities to best maintain departmental operations in the event of reduced staffing levels
- developing or updating procedures manuals for various departmental operations so as to enhance staffing flexibilities

- providing timely notification to the department head or designate if you are away due to ILI

Engineering Department Heads (or designate)

Ag & Bio: Lope Tabil (5317)
Chem: Richard Evitts (4766)
Civil & Geo: Jim Kells (5340)
Elec & Comp: David Dodds (5397)
Mech: Jim Bugg (5469)

Department heads will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- finding replacement instructors for those that are absent
- finding markers for replacement instructors (or instructors who are substituting for other instructors)
- designating alternate department heads (line of succession)
- designating alternate grade approvers for final grades, which could be in another department or at the College level (unless this requirement is suspended by the University)
- postponing or cancelling departmental events (e.g. public talks, departmental receptions, etc.)
- in conjunction with the department undergraduate student coordinator, changing department policies and practices re: missed classes, practicums, examinations, late assignments, etc. and informing the EPMT of same
- canceling entire classes (in consultation with the instructor and EPMT), and communicating same to students, department undergraduate student coordinator and the Dean for recording purposes
- assisting the instructor and lab technicians with developing a “buddy” system for intervening when the instructor or technician is away due to ILI
- following up with staff members to ensure that operations and/or procedures manuals are developed and/or updated

Engineering Dean (or designate)

Dean: Janusz Kozinski (5593)
Associate Dean: Jit Sharma (7049)

The Dean will take responsibility for mitigating the impacts of the flu pandemic by:

- designating an alternate dean (line of succession)
- in conjunction with the Student Academic Affairs Committee, deciding whether supplemental final exams would be more freely authorized
- in conjunction with the Student Academic Affairs Committee, deciding whether deferred and supplemental final exams would be invigilated by the College
- postponing or cancelling major College events (e.g. awards ceremonies, dinners, etc.)
- sentinel reporting of student and staff absences to the University, while ensuring that individual privacy is maintained