

March 11, 2020

For Minnesota West Students, Faculty and Staff

Due to growing concern regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Minnesota State suspended all school and business-related international travel, effective February 28, 2020.

The suspension of international travel includes study abroad programs and other activities involving Minnesota State faculty, staff, and students. The policy does not apply to personal travel outside of the U.S., but only to trips organized or sanctioned by the 37 colleges and universities of Minnesota State.

New guidelines issued March 1, 2020 by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) encourage higher education institutions to consider these measures given the speed of spread and number of countries experiencing human-to-human transmission.

“It is paramount that we ensure the safety and security of our students, faculty, and staff. Given the risks associated with the coronavirus, the CDC’s guidelines, and out of an abundance of caution, Minnesota State is taking all necessary precautionary steps,” stated Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra. “We are working closely with our colleges and universities and the Minnesota Department of Health to continue monitoring the situation.”

Minnesota State Specific Guidance and Information

When did the international travel suspension for Minnesota State-related business travel for students, faculty, or staff become effective?

The suspension became effective Friday, February 28, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. central standard time and impacted all international Minnesota State-related business travel for students, faculty, or staff at that time. There is no specific end date for the suspension, however, the suspension policy is being reviewed on a recurring basis.

What countries or locations are not included under the chancellor’s suspension of international travel?

The international travel suspension does not limit Minnesota State-related travel to the U.S. Territories including Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, U. S. Virgin Islands, or Puerto Rico. Given its proximity, Minnesota State-related travel to Canada will be reviewed on a case by case basis. There is no limit on domestic travel to include travel to Hawaii or Alaska. The suspension policy will be reviewed and updated on an as needed basis.

How long is the suspension of international travel?

While the international travel suspension policy is being reviewed on an as needed basis, there is no specific end date for the suspension. Those with Minnesota State-related international travel planned for the future should be in contact with their carriers and destination or hosts on cancellation or change policies and alternatives or options, given the circumstances.

How does the suspension impact those traveling to Minnesota State institutions from international locations (Examples: guest speakers, candidates, potential students, family members)?

There is no limit or restriction on those traveling from international locations to Minnesota State colleges, universities, or the Minnesota State system office. They will be subject to the protocols in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) depending on where they are coming from.

What if I paid a service charge to my college/university or to a third party for a study abroad experience that was canceled?

Minnesota State is working in close partnership with its 37 colleges and universities with the goal of easing potential impact on students. Individuals who prepaid for their international trip should contact their college/university representative to seek guidance.