

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Dear VSCS Community,

I know all of us have the novel coronavirus COVID-19 front of mind these days. Things are changing so quickly that it is hard to keep up. I am proud of how each of our colleges and universities are leaning into this challenge. Thank you all.

All employees, unless you are experiencing a cough or fever or have come into contact with someone likely to be infected with COVID-19, please plan to report to work tomorrow as scheduled, as our most pressing and immediate concern is to support our faculty and students with a transition to remote learning and to maintain essential operations.

On Friday, March 13, Governor Phil Scott issued an executive order declaring a State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19. A copy of this executive order can be found [here](#). The Governor's order directs the State of Vermont to take a number of actions designed to slow the spread of COVID-19 throughout our communities, and to protect the most vulnerable among us.

In his order, Governor Scott encourages telework among State of Vermont employees when that is feasible. The specific wording in the order reads, "The Secretary of Administration shall also, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Resources, encourage and facilitate telework among those State employees with the capacity to work remotely." It is important to note that the Governor did not state that all employees should stay home immediately. Instead, he stated that a process would be developed to facilitate telework where and when that makes sense. He encouraged other employers to consider following the State's lead.

The Vermont State Colleges System has heard clearly Governor Scott's strong request, and will begin an orderly process for expanding telework for those employees with positions that are compatible with working from home, and who have the resources, and capability to do so, as soon as possible.

Additional information about the telework transition process will be forthcoming. Each institution will be making plans to expand telework in the coming days. I am requesting Presidents, Deans of Administration, and HR Directors to coordinate with and support each other. To the maximum extent possible, we want our telework processes to be consistent across our colleges and universities.

Over the last week, I have witnessed tremendous resilience and generosity of spirit. I am confident that in the coming days I can count on everyone to assist our colleges and universities in a successful transition to temporary remote learning, while maintaining essential operations, and doing everything responsible to protect the health and safety of our college and university communities.

Keep the faith, Jeb

Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges System