February 26, 2020

Hokies abroad,

As you are likely aware, there is an outbreak of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) that has reported cases in 30 countries. Virginia Tech is monitoring the situation closely. The health and safety of our Hokies abroad is of utmost importance to us. The current risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus causing COVID-19) to Virginia Tech students studying abroad is generally low in most countries. As this situation progresses, we will address individual programs on a case-by-case basis.

We recommend students follow guidance from their host institution and host nation. Health recommendations from the Schiffert Health Center are also applicable for students studying abroad.

Avoid non-essential travel and take appropriate precautions, including:

- Check the local news of your destination before departing
- Have multiple means of communication available (cell phone, E-mail, etc.)
- Wash hands frequently
- Avoid touching your face
- Be aware of what you touch, particularly in public spaces
- Refrain from shaking hands
- Minimize time in densely crowded spaces
- Drink plenty of water, eat regular meals, and get a full night’s rest

These precautions are also helpful in addressing the flu. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that there have already been over 16,000 flu caused deaths this flu season. While it may be easy to overlook the flu because it is more common, all Hokies are at risk of exposure to the flu, regardless of your destination.

As the spread of COVID-19 develops, Virginia Tech will continue to provide support to ensure you are able to continue your studies, while mitigating as much risk of a negative incident as is possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out to VTGlobalSafety@vt.edu with any questions or concerns.

Safe travels,

Theresa Johansson
Director, Global Education Office

Kanitta Charoensiri, D.O., MBA
Director of Schiffert Health Center