

Latest on COVID-19 and campus operations

COO Larry Sampler announces an extension of restrictions on University-sponsored travel and shares latest on potential vaccines in weekly Early Bird series.



By Larry Sampler, chief operating officer

December 2, 2020

Dear Roadrunners,

I hope you all had a restful and safe fall break. As you've probably seen in the news, Colorado continues to see a record-breaking number of cases of COVID-19 and last week experienced its highest hospitalization rate since the outset of the pandemic. As a result, Gov. Jared Polis issued an **executive order** Nov. 23 to help prevent hospitals and emergency departments from being overwhelmed, ordering them to transfer and cease admitting new patients. We also heard last week that the governor and his partner, Marlon Reis, tested positive for the virus. While these developments don't directly impact our campus operations, they certainly underscore the severity of our current situation.

While MSU Denver's positivity rate on campus of under 4% of those tested remains well below the state rate of 8.4% (and marginally below the recommended not-to-exceed limit of 5%), as members of the Colorado community we need to keep doing our part by following the University's **health and safety protocols** every day without exception.

University-related travel suspended through spring

Based on the most recent data and projections from the state, we have decided to extend the **suspension of all University-funded or -affiliated travel through the end of the spring semester** (*emphasis added*). Faculty, staff or students who foresee a need to travel that warrants an exception to this policy should act well in advance of their anticipated travel to request an exception (proposed by the relevant dean and granted by the provost for academic travel; and proposed by the relevant director or associate vice president and approved by the COO for nonacademic travel). Please contact the **Office of International Studies** for additional information on study-abroad courses.

This policy does not address personal travel. However, MSU Denver asks its constituents to please act responsibly and either postpone travel plans or take extreme precautionary measures while traveling in any capacity.

Per recent clinical guidance, those returning from out-of-state travel should consider quarantining upon arriving home and be tested for COVID-19 (using a PCR test, not a rapid antigen test) five days after the date of return. At a minimum, quarantine should continue until test results are known. Once quarantine is ended, if earlier than 14 days, continue to monitor for the development of any COVID-19 symptoms for up to 14 days. The recommendation to **wait five days to be tested** (*emphasis added*) is based on the fact that it takes time for an infected individual's viral load to be sufficient to elicit a positive test result.

Latest on potential vaccinations

I know that many of our community members are excited about the potential vaccines reported in the media. We are cautiously optimistic as well, but we also need to be realistic. Based on preliminary information regarding vaccine availability, it appears that early access to the vaccine will be limited to prioritized cohorts – first responders and medical personnel at the fore – and then more gradually rolled out to the general population. We realistically expect access to the vaccines for the general population to become available in early summer. We will continue to monitor the latest news from the state and share it with our community.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about our [Safe Return to Campus](#), please reach out [through this form](#) or via email at roadrunnersafereturn@msudenver.edu. Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Larry Sampler

Vice president for Administration and Finance and Chief Operating Officer