

TO: Colleagues

FROM: Michael R. Halleran
Provost

DATE: September 2, 2009

SUBJECT: Flu Season

As we face the upcoming flu season, the health of all members of our community is of utmost importance and we will seek to balance this overriding concern with carrying out our missions of teaching, research and service. While we expect that William & Mary, like all universities, will see its share of cases of the H1N1 virus ("swine flu"), the scope and severity are not yet known. What is known is that this will likely pose substantial challenges to the academic calendar and require a good deal of flexibility and planning from all of us. We will be following the best medical advice for reducing the spread of infection and you have also received a memo from Vice President for Administration Anna Martin on best practices in preparing for and dealing with this flu (<http://www.wm.edu/news/pressreleases/2009/vice-president-martins-message-regarding-h1n1-planning.php>). For more information, health alerts and updates, please also visit www.wm.edu/flu. The College's Emergency Management Team will continue to update that site throughout the year.

On the academic side, it is essential that the faculty take this situation into account throughout the fall and spring semesters. For example, students, faculty or staff should stay away from classes or the office when the situation warrants, and we should do nothing to make students or staff feel that they will be penalized for necessary absences. We will need to be very flexible and accommodating in response to an expected higher rate of student absences, which could mean anything from make-up exams and changed assignments to modifying a syllabus in the wake of larger disruptions. In some cases, Blackboard might be an important part of adjusting course work, and Gene Roche and his staff are prepared to work with faculty as needed. Adjustments to courses may result from faculty absences as well. Faculty should also indicate to their students how they will deal with absences. Faculty themselves are also more likely to be ill and should not teach or meet with students or colleagues when they (or family members) have flu-like symptoms. In short, in light of the many possible scenarios that could develop, we cannot prepare for all of them in advance, but rather we must be prepared to adjust and accommodate under the expected higher rate of serious influenza this season

I encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with your colleagues, chair and dean and to begin to consider possible changes that you would need to make in your courses. This would be an obvious topic for department and faculty meetings. If you have questions or suggestions, please let me know. Thank you.