

VGCC Pandemic Flu Preparedness Plan

Purpose

VGCC has created this Pandemic Preparedness Plan to guide the College in preparing for and responding to an influenza pandemic outbreak. The purpose of this plan is to minimize the impact of an influenza pandemic on students, faculty and staff by describing the specific actions to be taken by the College based on the following objectives and assumptions.

Objectives:

- To protect the lives, safety, and health of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors at every Vance Granville Community College campus.
- To effectively communicate with all involved parties throughout the duration of a pandemic.
- To provide for the continuation of as many college operations and services as possible as long as it is safe to do so.
- To prevent the spread of infection through health and hygiene education.

Assumptions:

- In the event of a pandemic, the State of North Carolina will have minimal resources available for local assistance and local authorities will be responsible for community based response plans.
- A pandemic flu will easily and rapidly spread from person to person resulting in substantial absenteeism at the College.
- Vaccines and antiviral medications will be in short supply during the initial months after the onset of a pandemic.
- Direction to close schools, public events, restrict travel, and quarantine areas may come from the NC Public Health Department and/or the Granville Vance Health Department.
- During a pandemic VGCC may need to close facilities for eight weeks or longer.

Relationship to Current Emergency Plans

If a pandemic impacts the normal operations at VGCC, the College will implement the existing emergency management structure in the Crisis Management Plan to manage the response and recovery activities prior to, during and after a pandemic.

The Pandemic Preparedness Plan will incorporate the VGCC Crisis Communication Plan and Emergency Management Structure, two components of the Crisis Management Plan. Information on the Pandemic Preparedness Plan and the Crisis Management Plan can be found on the VGCC internal site.

Authority

The VGCC Pandemic Preparedness Plan will be authorized by the President of the College. The plan is designed to work in conjunction with plans by the Granville Vance County Health Department; the Franklin County Health Department; the Warren County Health Department and shall be subordinate to all local, state and federal pandemic plans. A copy of the plan will be provided to the aforementioned Health Departments.

Communication

VGCC Crisis Communication Plan

The VGCC Crisis Communication Plan will be activated in the event that a pandemic begins in order to communicate the response actions of the College and keep the College Community informed. Procedures and communication tasks are outlined in the Crisis Communication Plan and templates will be drafted in advance to address both internal and external communication during a pandemic.

Emergency Notification Phone System

In addition to the Crisis Communication Plan, the College's Emergency Notification Phone System should be considered for communication by the Crisis Management Team if the College facilities are closed due to a pandemic. In the event that the College is required to close, the Crisis Management Team would not have access to the campus to establish an Emergency Operations Center and would therefore need to utilize the phone system for conference call meetings. Prearrangements should be made for the phone system to be utilized for use as a "Virtual EOC" for the Emergency Management Team. The President or his designee will determine the time and frequency of conference calls for the Crisis Management Team.

Office of Public Safety Website

The VGCC Office of Public Safety website will have information posted on the current situation concerning any activity on a potential influenza pandemic. Links to important sites including the World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control, NC Department of Health and Human Services, and the official Federal site, pandemicflu.gov will be available. Information about reducing the spread of infection such as procedures for social distancing and hand washing will also be available on the VGCC Office of Public Safety website.

Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Response Team and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The Crisis Management Team members are listed in the college's Crisis Management Plan. During the early phases of the onset of a pandemic, the Emergency Response Team may decide to open the EOC to discuss action plans for the College response based on information from the state and local authorities on how and when the pandemic is projected to affect the area. If various counties are to be affected the respective Campus Dean will be brought in with the Emergency Response Team. The Crisis Management Team will then be activated and notified of the situation and response.

Campus Deans

During a pandemic, some areas may be affected before others due to increased employee and student absenteeism, area specific quarantines, travel restrictions, or other possible mandates from state and local government. Consequently, personnel at one campus may be impacted more in the initial stages. As mentioned above, the Campus Deans should be included in the EOC meetings to ensure communication and information flow to and from their staff, faculty and students is taking place.

Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff have a responsibility to stay informed about any emergency information from the College and to provide that information to their students and visitors. If a potential pandemic situation occurs, faculty and staff will be expected to follow the recommendations issued by the College, such as campus closings, social distancing policies, personal hygiene procedures, and share that information with students and visitors. All information will be posted on the public safety website.

Students

VGCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students in all situations. Students have a responsibility to stay informed about current events and take the necessary precautions to ensure their personal safety and health. In a potential pandemic, students will be expected to follow all recommendations issued by the College.

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

The VGCC director of Public Safety and Preparedness will be responsible for monitoring and disseminating the most update pandemic information from public health sources. The Director shall maintain frequent communication with the Granville Vance County Health Department to keep VGCC faculty, staff and students informed of the latest developments in the community. All information will be posted on the VGCC public safety website and any new information will be sent to the vice President of Finance and Operations for approval before distribution to college personnel.

Continuation of Operations Plan

Each department will have in place or will be working towards developing a Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) as part of the Business Continuity Plan. The following are some examples of areas that should be addressed in the COOP development:

Faculty and Student Support

- Policies and procedures should be developed and implemented for emergency actions such as waivers concerning matters like reducing the required hours of instruction if a semester should end early, leaving dates and times open for finals and allowing grades to be turned in whenever a student completes a course, or other methods for completing courses.
- Possibly consider creating companion websites for all courses in the event a decision is made to continue coursework on-line.
- Use Learning Management Systems (Blackboard, Campus Cruiser and Moodle) as another means of communicating policies with Instructional unit.
- Develop a list of courses that could be offered completely online with no need for students or faculty to attend any campus.
- Develop a policy or guidelines to address academic concerns of students absent from classes due to illness or quarantine.
- Develop contingency plans for issues related to tuition payments and refunds, withdrawal policies, and registration.

Human Resource Issues

- Identify and document key positions with high risks of exposure and establish expectations and standards of operation for these key positions.
- Develop policies and procedures for absences related to the pandemic including reporting absences, continuation of benefits and pay practice.
- Establish procedures for time recording, for able employees refusing to report to work and for prohibiting infected employees from reporting to work (method of detection, disciplinary action and return to work triggers).
- Establish understanding of pandemic illnesses as related to workers compensation.
- Prepare policy to restrict travel to and from infected areas. Including restricting travel to effected campuses.
- Develop partnerships with healthcare facilities to provide service to employees.
- Prepare insurance processes to include health, disability and supplemental insurance.
- Prepare work at home guidelines that address telecommuting issues.

Information Technology Systems and Telecommuting Demands

- Prepare for increased demand on information technology infrastructure for voice and data communications in the event the College is closed and classes are cancelled.
- Prepare for the technology support required for developing the list of online courses to be offered when the College is closed during a pandemic.
- Departments should consult with IT personnel to determine what is needed to continue with college operations, by developing alternate work policies such as telecommuting, teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

- Key personnel should be identified and consult with IT to establish policies and the ability to work from home (i.e. Ability to log into servers, e-mail).

Recovery

Planning for recovery from a pandemic will assist the College Community in returning to normal operations as quickly and efficiently as possible. Recovery will be dependent on several factors such as the duration of the pandemic, the length of time the College is closed, the number of students, faculty and staff affected and the time of year (mid-semester, summer...). Topics that should be considered include/but are not limited to:

Returning to Normal Operations

The Crisis Management Team will make decisions on how the College will return to normal operations based on the situation and information from the state and local public health authorities. The resumption of college business plans will be communicated to employees and students by the procedures outlined in the Crisis Communication Plan. Recommendations may include making adjustments to the academic calendar and rescheduling special events.

Support for Students, Faculty and Staff

Consideration should be made for providing psychological counseling and crisis debriefing to individuals who have been affected themselves or who have had family members affected by the pandemic.

VGCC Alert Levels and Actions

The following guide outlines the general actions to be taken by the College during a pandemic event. VGCC's actions will be based on the recommendations of the CDC and local county Health Departments. The college will maintain an open relationship with various county health departments so we can be advised of any outbreaks on our area.

VGCC's alert levels are based on the Federal Response Stages and WHO pandemic response alert phases.

Additional actions taken by the College, related to the pandemic, will be based on any information provided by federal, state and local government, and/or through the Granville Vance health department.

A Pandemic Severity Index has been established by the federal government to be used as a tool by communities in their planning efforts and has assigned federal response stages aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Pandemic Phases (Flu.gov).

Satellite Campuses

We realize that VGCC is unique in the fact that the college has 4 campuses in 4 counties. It is a real possibility that an outbreak may be localized within a county and will only affect the campus within that county. COOP plans should account for this possibility, so that the college can make the appropriate response for those students and staff that are affected by the outbreak.

WHO Alert Levels

WHO Level 1 Inter-Pandemic-Low risk of human cases

WHO Level 2 New Virus in animals-No human cases, but is a higher risk

WHO Level 3 Pandemic Alert-No or very limited human-to-human transmission

WHO Level 4 New virus causes human cases-Evidence of human-to-human transmission

WHO Level 5 New virus causes human cases-Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission

WHO Level 6 Pandemic-Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission

VGCC Alert Levels

Public Health orders will supersede any planned college responses.

Alert Level I

No human to human spread of disease, WHO level II

- Crisis Management Plan on file
- Pandemic Flu Plan on file

Alert Level II

Human to human transmission found but localized, WHO level III

- Pandemic Flu Plan on file
- Liaison established with health agencies
- Public Safety website updated to give VGCC staff and students current WHO status.

Alert Level III

New Virus causes human cases found, significant human to human transmission, WHO level IV and V

- Crisis Management Team will meet and be updated by ERT
- Classes remain in session with stepped up efforts to educate about infection control
- Pandemic Flu Plan activated and Emergency response Team meets to determine it's implementation
- Activate Crisis Communication Plan to keep College Community updated on current status
- All departments prepare to initiate contingency plans
- Notify essential personnel to prepare for shutdown procedures
- Students may be advised to return home until further notice

- Continuation of classes will be managed on a day-to-day basis however suspension is likely
- Curtailment of all extra-curricular activities may begin
- Essential personnel may be given PPE to use

Alert Level IV

Widespread outbreak in North America, WHO Level VI

These actions will be determined by the location of the outbreak in North America and the response of local health department.

- Emergency Operations Center activated and Crisis Management Team will monitor situation
- Campus will close and only critical functions and essential personnel will be allowed on campus
- All special events and activities cancelled, including activities at civic center
- Essential personnel with remote access will be sent home to continue their job duties

VGCC Recovery – College returns to normal operations

- College facilities reopen
- Crisis Management team debriefs the response
- Crisis management team meets with local health departments for debrief