



## **UNIVERSITY PANDEMIC PLAN**

### **Preparation, Management and Recovery**

Prepared by:

**RISK MANAGEMENT AND PURCHASING SERVICES**

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## Introduction

Over the last few years we have become more aware of the eventuality of an influenza pandemic and its potential for impacting public health, provision of essential services and our economy.

An influenza pandemic is much more than just a problem for the health care system - it is a societal problem and is best managed by the coordinated participation and cooperation of governments, businesses, institutions, organizations and citizens.

Because a pandemic influenza could cause a great deal of illness and death with a major impact on societal function, Ontarians, like others around the world, need to prepare and respond when a pandemic arrives.

Why should post secondary institutions prepare for a pandemic?

Post secondary institutions have made plans for a number of types of crises but have not generally undertaken plans for a community health emergency such as an influenza pandemic and will therefore have difficulty managing the challenges represented by such an event without advance planning and preparation. Inability to manage these issues could result in significant operational problems, lost instructional time and temporary closure of the institution resulting in financial impacts and loss of reputation.

This **planning guideline** has been developed to assist Academic, Research, Residence and Administrative units with pandemic influenza preparedness, response, and recovery plans.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of establishing and implementing a University Pandemic Plan are:

- **To protect the physical, mental and overall well being of our students, faculty and staff to the degree possible.**
- **To preserve the academic, research, physical, reputation and financial integrity of the University, in the delivery of its mission.**

In the event of a pandemic communication to members of the University community and the general public will be coordinated to ensure timely and effective communication. All reasonable considerations will be made to protect the Laurentian University community, our image, reputation and academic integrity.

There will be an annual review of the plan by the Pandemic Team, The Crisis Management Team and the Executive Team.

## Plan Working Assumptions

The following planning assumptions have been determined through examining risk scenarios of reduced capacity and potential shut down of University operations and their impact on the plan objectives, due diligence and relationships with external partners:

### Plan Parameters

- The plan will address the immediate preventative stage, the period of time when early indicators of a pandemic are emerging, the actual pandemic phase and the recovery phase.
- The plan will respond to two possible risk scenarios: a total externally imposed shut down and a substantially reduced workforce condition (30% - 50% staff reduction).
- The fundamental driving principle is to protect the physical and mental health and overall well being of all faculty, staff and students.
- Implementation of certain aspects of the plan **may be over the long term.**
- Upon declaration of the University plan activation by the Crisis Management Team the University will operate under a crisis mode. As such, the Crisis Management Team will reserve the right to suspend certain policy and other decision-making conditions which could negatively impact the objectives of the pandemic plan.
- Measures to minimize the University's financial liability in all business risk scenarios should be examined.
- Each area must identify their highest priority services so that essential functions can be determined.

### Communicating

- The Director, Public Affairs is the official spokesperson for Laurentian University and will (liaise with the Sudbury & District Health Unit (SDHU) pandemic communication network) and take the lead in and the responsibility for internal and external communications to the university community.
- Community communications will be timely, regular and frequent.
- Access to the University's communications vehicles by the Director, Public Affairs, will be maintained whatever the status of the campus. These vehicles include the web, e-mails, broadcast phone messages and other forms of electronic communications.
- The University will not be a source of medical information, but will direct members of the community to the SDHU website.

### Preserving the University Mandate and Community Care

During all stages of a pandemic:

- Essential services will be defined to preserve community care and continuity of the organizational priorities

- Academic program continuity will be maintained to the extent possible through measures such as encouraging faculty to enable enhanced self study or course/term extensions. High absenteeism in both classroom and practicum experiences can be expected. Students in practicum experiences will stay in their placements where the integrity of the learning experience is not compromised.
- In the event of a University closure, all feasible efforts will be made to relocate students to their families or other safe refuges. For students remaining in residence, measures will be in place to the extent that critical external conditions such as public utilities, food services are available to support critical student needs.

### **External Considerations**

- Many community agencies can be expected to close due to absenteeism. This will cause disruption in placements for many students doing their practicum experiences.
- The closure of placements and differing policies regarding students will cause inconsistency about completion of required practice placement hours. This may result in some students having the opportunity to complete required placement hours while some are excluded. The impact of such inequities will be addressed in the recovery phase.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Executive Team**

The University's Executive Team is responsible for declaring the activation of the University Pandemic Plan and for decisions related to its integrity and continued implementation.

The Executive Team will review information from the University Crisis Management Team. If required, the Executive Team will make the decision to declare closure of the University's facilities or to interrupt or suspend academic activity.

### **University Crisis Management Team**

The role and responsibilities of the University Crisis Management Team are outlined in the University Emergency Response Plan.

As they pertain to the University Pandemic Plan, the Crisis Management Team shall liaise with the Executive Team throughout all phases of the University's pandemic preparation, response and management, to ensure the on-going integrity of the pandemic plan decision making process.

## **Pandemic Task Team**

Under the direction of the Crisis Management Team, the Pandemic Task Team is responsible for reviewing the performance of the University Pandemic Plan and making recommendations for enhancements to the Vice President, Administration.

The Vice President's role is to advise the Executive Team of the status of local pandemic plans and external conditions, with a view to their impact on the University plan as a whole, throughout all phases and make recommendations accordingly.

**(Please see Figure. 1 regarding the bottom/up process of Roles and responsibilities)**

## **Deans and Directors**

Deans and Directors are responsible for ensuring the implementation of University pandemic procedures and practices affecting their students, faculty, staff, guests and visitors, and for the development of unit plans to support the delivery of essential academic and administrative services.

Their role is to monitor conditions which could affect the delivery of essential services to students, faculty and staff in their Faculty or department and advising the Provost and Vice President, Academic and the Vice President, Administration respectively, of these conditions.

## **Chairs, Academic Directors and Managers**

Chairs, Academic Directors and Managers are responsible for implementing University and department specific pandemic procedures and practices.

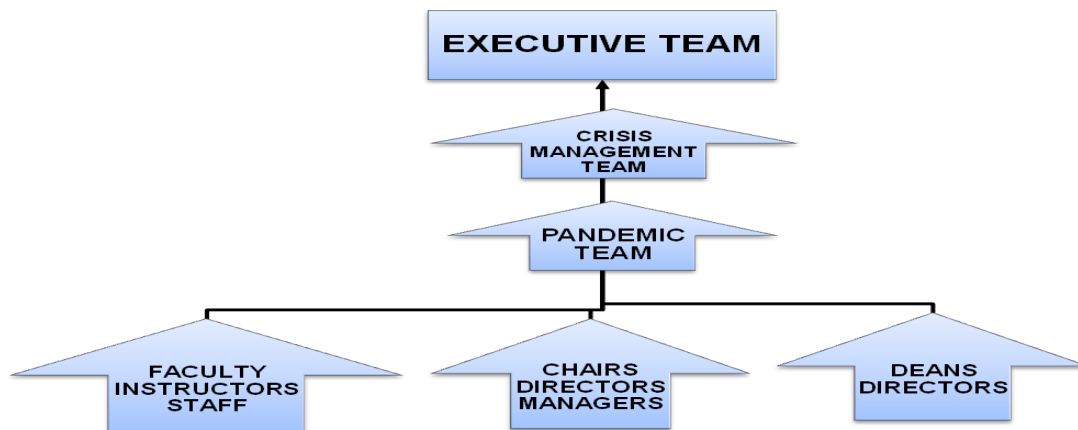
Their role is to monitor and advise the respective Dean or Director of any lapses or changing conditions affecting the delivery of essential academic and administrative services to their students, faculty and staff.

## **Faculty, Instructors and Staff**

The responsibility of faculty, instructors and staff is to support the delivery of academic programs and essential services to students, **as directed by the University.**

Their role is to implement pandemic related measures and procedures outlined by their respective Chairs, Directors and Managers.

Figure 1 - Roles and Responsibilities



## Organizational Priorities

In the event of a disruption or shut down, the University recognizes the need to support the following organizational priorities and critical functions:

communications; and *where feasible*,

- delivery of the teaching/learning process and essential student related services;
- continuation and maintenance of research activity;
- maintenance of first-line medical response and critical security services ;
- measures to support the health and well being of students and employees including provision of health services, counseling and debriefing
- financial and human resource management, including the delivery of payroll, payments to critical suppliers
- preservation of buildings and facilities;

## Communications

The Director of Public Affairs is responsible for the establishment of a Pandemic Communications strategy and implementation plan.

This plan will include measures for:

- building community awareness in the pre-pandemic phase,
- declaring the activation of the University Pandemic Plan,
- maintaining community communications through all phases of the University Pandemic Plan, and
- maintaining external communications.

The Manager of Health and Counselling Services is responsible for primary contact with the Sudbury & District Health Unit with respect to health related issues of the pandemic.

The Director of Security and Parking is responsible for the primary contact with the City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Medical Services (EMS) representatives with respect to emergency related issues of the pandemic.

## **Business Continuity**

### **Decision to Close University Facilities**

The decision by the Executive Team to close University facilities will be based on the status of critical internal and external conditions impacting the health, safety and security of the Laurentian community and the capacity of the University to continue to deliver essential services on campus.

While University facilities may close, continuity of research activity on campus, where feasible, may proceed pending the approval of the Crisis Management Team.

### **Maintaining Essential Functions and Services**

The University's organizational priorities will be supported by the following essential functions and services:

- the presence of a University executive decision-making capability;
- two redundant communications vehicles: the Laurentian website and phone line;
- IT support for the integrity of essential services;
- an offsite emergency communications call system;
- a course status communications centre;
- essential staff to operate the Health Services for student and essential staff care;
- provision of off campus mental health counseling care service for students;
- a core Security unit, including first line medical response;
- Physical Plant staff to maintain life safety and HVAC systems;
- residence operations support and staff including provision of food and water;
- custodial services for hygiene services and infection control;
- on and off campus payroll and payment to critical suppliers support; and
- support for preservation of vulnerable research activity.

### **Maintaining Essential Care for Community Members**

A pandemic plan for addressing essential services of the Health Services, the Counselling and Support Programs and Housing has been developed by Student Services.

Student Affairs is responsible for providing health care guidance, emotional support, and advice; creating and communicating health information; and Director of Services is responsible for maintaining accommodations for students and staff unable to return home.

Specifically, Student Affairs will:

- through the Health Services, provide medical care;
- review and create medical content for communication through Health Promotion;
- through the Counselling and Support Programs, organize and staff a call center to provide emotional support and advice to students.

Specifically, Director of Services will:

- maintain residences for students unable to return home and for essential staff requiring accommodation.

## **Ensuring Academic Integrity**

Discussions or resolution of matters of academic integrity and course management shall be deferred to the recovery phase.

## **Ensuring Financial Integrity**

The University will continue to manage its financial affairs in a responsible manner to the extent that our financial institutions can support such service during a pandemic event.

This includes as a minimum:

- maintaining accurate financial records,
- recording payments made to the University from government agencies and other sources,
- ensuring there are sufficient funds available to cover payroll costs.
- payments to critical suppliers.

## **Human Resource Management**

Human Resources will provide advice and consultation on matters relating to the establishment and maintenance of core essential functions during all pandemic phases. This may include re-deployment of staff and faculty into areas outside of normal work, in order to meet operational priorities and respond to severe absence in core areas, or to respond to waves of epidemic presentation.

In the event of a pandemic, the University will continue to manage essential human resource activity, which will include as a minimum, the delivery of payroll and facilitation of benefits and pension administration, to the extent that related external providers and systems can support.

During a pandemic event, matters of policy, regulatory affairs and labor relations, will be deferred to the pandemic recovery phase.



	<p>Security Services  Purchasing Services  Physical Plant and Planning  Department  Public Affairs and Communications  Maintaining Research Integrity  Food Services  Residences  Health Services  Registrar's Office  Academic Units  Federated Universities  Northern Ontario School of  Medicine  Child and Family Centre</p>	
<p><b>Stage 2</b>   <b>Pandemic Alert Management – Minor Impact</b></p>	<p>Maintain inter-pandemic measures  Take pre-pandemic action by the Pandemic Team</p> <p>Monitor Internal Absenteeism Levels</p> <p>Receive alerts and disseminate surveillance information received from SDHU</p> <p>Communicate status of Pandemic to University Community.</p> <p>Activate Pandemic Plan – containment measures</p> <p>Review and Update Contingency Plans for maintaining essential function. Update Pandemic detailed Plan.</p>	<p><b>Phase III</b>  Pandemic Alert –New virus causes human cases = No or very limited human-to-human transmission</p> <p><b>Phase IV</b>  Pandemic Alert – New virus causes human cases = Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission</p>

<p><b>Stage 3</b></p> <p><b>Pandemic Management – Major Impact</b></p>	<p>Maintain Pandemic Alert measures.</p> <p>Issuing of regular updates to the Laurentian University community based on information provided by SDHU.</p> <p>Manage Pandemic through Crisis Management Team.</p> <p>Coordinate assessment and response with the City of Greater Sudbury emergency response and Sudbury District Health Unit.</p> <p>Communicate recommendation to Executive Team. Communicate decision to community.</p> <p>Activate Contingency Plans to respond to pandemic influenza presence.</p>	<p><b>Phase V</b></p> <p>Pandemic Alert – New virus causes human cases = Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission</p> <p><b>Phase VI</b></p> <p><b>PANDEMIC</b> – Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission</p>
<p><b>Stage 4</b></p> <p><b>Pandemic Recovery</b></p>	<p>Manage Pandemic Recovery through Crisis Management Team.</p> <p>Executive Team to declare transition to recovery phase.</p> <p>Normalize of University functions and return to pre-emergency activity level</p> <p>Review/evaluate/revise Pandemic Plan</p> <p>Communicate recovery and renormalization message to University community</p>	<p>Return to normal operations</p>

## **External Partnerships**

### **Emergency Management**

During the pre-pandemic phase, the University will consult with the City of Greater Sudbury EMS representatives, to review respective Pandemic Plans to clarify expectations and determine opportunities to enhance response.

### **Public Health**

The University will partner with SDHU to proactively identify university specific pandemic related issues, needs and mutual emergency response and communication measures.

### **Academic/Professional Associations and Boards**

Critical external professional associations, examination Boards, and other external bodies which currently control graduating students' requirements for professional licensing, certifications, registrations, etc. should be identified and where possible, alternative means for accommodating the achievement of such requirements should be negotiated on behalf of the students.