SUBJECT: Community Support
February 7, 2020

Dear Ithaca Campus Community,

As you are aware, the World Health Organization has declared the 2019 Novel Coronavirus a global health emergency that is impacting dozens of countries, including the U.S. Though the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. has been relatively small in comparison to mainland China, Japan, Australia and Germany among many others, any issue that causes great unrest globally can also have a real impact on our international community of scholars.

As noted in the campus message from Vice President Ryan Lombardi and Assistant Vice President Sharon McMullen earlier today, the U.S. is in the middle of cold and flu season. Over the coming weeks, it is likely that many members of our campus will endure colds, flu and other illnesses, as is common during winter months in Ithaca. While it is understandable to feel anxious about your health or the health of others, it is never okay to make assumptions or accusations based on someone’s perceived symptoms or identity.

Many members of our community – students, faculty and staff – are concerned about the welfare of family and friends living in impacted regions. We encourage you to be supportive of each other.

The diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths. It is disappointing that many of our Asian and Asian American community members have experienced bias attitudes or actions as a result of the public health issue. These behaviors cannot go unnoted. In challenging times, it is especially important to recognize our collective commitment to diversity and inclusion and to put Cornell’s core values into practice.

Our community is not unique in facing concerns about the coronavirus, and it is important to remember that the health risk to the Cornell community remains low. We encourage any member of our community who needs support to reach out for assistance. We also ask faculty and staff to remain compassionate and understanding of the unique challenges that our students may be facing.

Sincerely,

Avery August
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Presidential Advisor on Diversity and Equity

Vijay Pendakur
Robert W. and Elizabeth C. Staley Dean of Students and Presidential Advisor on Diversity and Equity

Angela Winfield
Associate Vice President for Inclusion and Workforce Diversity and Presidential Advisor on Diversity and Equity

Wendy Wolford
Vice Provost for International Affairs

Community Building & Support Resources

Students are welcome to call, email or stop by the Office of Global Learning during open office hours to voice concerns. Community building and support is also available through the Asian & Asian American Center (AC3).

The university is committed to fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive living, learning and working environment for the entire university community. All members of the community are encouraged to report bias incidents or concerns.

Support services are available to all members of the Cornell community. Students may consult with counselors from Cornell Health Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or speak with a peer counselor at Empathy, Assistance and Referral Service (EARS). Employees resources are available through the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP).

For more information about the coronavirus and steps that Cornell is taking to protect the health and safety of our community, visit the Cornell University novel coronavirus website.