March 12, 2020

On the evening of March 11, President Trump announced limitations regarding travel from Europe to the United States. As you have also likely seen, the details of this development are not entirely clear.

It appears this directive affects travel for foreign nationals and does not apply to U.S. citizens and/or permanent residents. Our understanding is that foreign nationals who have been in a country within the European Union within 14 days of their travel to the United States will not be permitted to enter the U.S. Beyond this, the details are murky.

At this time, we caution all members of the Sarah Lawrence community of European citizenship about returning home or traveling to Europe for spring break and/or during the College’s two weeks of remote/online classes, and recommend either remaining in on-campus housing or at another location within the U.S. Because this travel ban’s guidelines could shift at a moment’s notice, members of our community would then be unable to return home and/or to campus. For this reason, we believe it is also prudent for American citizens who are planning to travel to Europe to also consider canceling those plans. If you have already left campus, please be in touch with your faculty members and/or supervisors about the possibility of not being able to return to campus, and how you would complete the work for the semester.

The College is actively working with study abroad students who may be affected by this announcement and recommending that if they were planning to return to the United States, they do so as soon as possible and/or travel through the United Kingdom, which is not included in this ban.

We understand last night’s announcement from Washington has many feeling concerned. We will do our best to stay on top of future developments, and ensure our communications and guidance keep pace with this rapidly changing situation.

Lastly, and as a reminder, Sarah Lawrence intends to remain open and operational during spring break as well as during the two weeks of remote/online classes, unless directed otherwise by health officials. This includes housing and food service. However, the College advises students, to the maximum extent possible, to remain at home or away from campus until April 5 if they have chosen to leave campus for spring break. This reduction in the on-campus population will help promote social distancing that is critical in our collective response. We hope to be able to fully restore in-person classes on campus on Monday, April 6, but please understand the recommended return date may be postponed if conditions require; the College will provide an update no later than March 30. We know this may be a significant inconvenience but it is in the interest of reducing the population density on campus, thereby mitigating the potential spread of COVID-19, while also recognizing that many members of our residential community may not have an alternative place to go during break and the period of remote learning. This is the second page, continued from the first. Subsequent pages after the first page do not feature the header/footer content. They do, however, use the same margins as the first page.

Sincerely,

Tom Blum
Vice President for Administration
COVID-19 Response Team Lead