

SPSCC COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) Communications Plan

OVERVIEW

1. The Chief Community Relations Officer (Kelly Green) will be the primary disseminator of information and will coordinate with the President and Executive Leadership Team at all times.
2. The Marketing/PR Department (Kelly Green, Kati Sagawa, Amanda Bretz) will be in charge of internal and external communication planning and draft all public and internal statements for the executive team's approval and dissemination.
3. All media calls will be referred to Kelly Green or Kati Sagawa. Any other SPSCC spokespeople must be coordinated with Kelly.
4. Communication will take place in English – we will encourage our ESL and Global education staff to assist with disseminating information to our English-learners and will rely upon the use of state and federal disease and safety information that has been professionally translated.
5. The highest priority will be providing immediate notifications through Omnilert of any immediate health and safety information including closures. Emergency alerts of a time-sensitive nature will not have full Executive Team review.
6. Proactive messages (hand-washing, cough etiquette, stay home when sick, see a doctor if symptoms persist, etc.) will be issued as needed.
7. Public Relations will collaborate with local, regional, SBCTC and other efforts when crafting messages to internal and external audiences.
8. SPSCC will rely on external health officials to be content experts on the virus, the spread of the virus, and other medical matters.
9. Should a SPSCC employee or student be diagnosed with a coronavirus, all Clery Act, FERPA and HIPAA guidelines will apply to internal and external communication. We will not provide names or other identifying information in accordance with those regulations.
11. Rumor control, addressing inaccurate information and providing immediate clarification to our SPSCC community will be a high priority and will be done in conjunction with executive team members.

COMMUNICATION PHASES

(Phases for communication strategy use only—not for external broadcast)

Level 0: Prevention and Preparation [Current Level]

SPSCC facing only potential risks, no known cases

Level 1: Heightened Alert

Local region experiences confirmed cases

Level 2: Direct Impact

Suspected or confirmed cases in or around SPSCC campuses

Level 3: Significant Direct Impact

Multiple, sustained cases of virus in and on SPSCC campuses

STRATEGIES for Level 0-1 (Prevention and Preparation and Heightened Alert)

1. Identify how SPSCC will receive information about potential health risks.

- Thurston County Emergency Management (primarily via Rob Shailor, Security Director)
- Washington State Department of Health: Online monitoring
- Federal Center for Disease Control: Online monitoring

2. Create communication channels

- COVID-19 webpage – spscc.edu/news/coronavirus
- Formal messages to students, employees and faculty
- Social media continuous
- Posters - Prevention messages
- OMNILERT – Emergency use only
- Ensure our internal emergency contact list is up-to-date ([Smartsheet: Crisis Comm – Emergency Phone List](#))
- Identify how information and notification will be provided to the leadership team
- Ensure our K-12 partner lists are up-to-date if dual-credit students are impacted
- Create an internal shared list of answered and pending questions and a process for collecting and submitting questions to the list. This provides accurate, centralized communication

3. Inform SPSCC students and employees about what to do if they're ill or a student, employee, or visitor appears to be ill.

4. Share information prior to Spring Break about travel, especially international travel.

5. Encourage students, faculty, and staff to consider their personal emergency preparation should they need to stay at their homes for 14 days or more.

6. When possible, prepare messages in advance:

- Response to rumor that student or employee who has COVID-19, been tested for the virus, or been exposed to the virus.
- Event cancellation
- Closure of the college, including class expectations (face-to-face, online, hybrid) during a closing.

7. Encourage all departments and programs to consider how they could conduct their work if they couldn't be on campus.

Key Messages for Level 0-1

- SPSCC is closely tracking information about the coronavirus and coordinating with the Washington State Department of Health, Thurston County Public Health Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and other organizations.
- Employees and students are encouraged to take steps to decrease the spread of all viruses including practicing good hygiene and staying home when sick.
- SPSCC encourages employees and students to sign up for college emergency alerts and seek accurate information from reputable sources.
- Follow CDC travel guidelines.
- Rely on trusted sources for information: SPSCC's website, CDC and DOH. Be wary of social rumors.
- This is an emerging, quickly evolving situation. SPSCC will provide updated information as it becomes available, including updated guidance.

STRATEGIES for Level 2-3 (Direct Impact and Significant Direct Impact)

1. Increase communication with Thurston County Public Health. Take part in briefings.
2. Provide regular updates to students, faculty, and staff, including the college's continuity of operations plans. Determine frequency as needed. Primary channels: email, social media, website. Also ask faculty to share information with students in their classes.
3. Be available to answer media questions and remind SPSCC leadership about who is authorized to communicate with media. Ensure media has up-to-date contacts.
4. Stage closure signage at all facilities for easy access if needed.
5. Post disease prevention information on campuses and SPSCC properties.

Additional Key Messages for Level 2-3

- Employees and students who are sick need to stay home. Notify your supervisors and faculty of absences.
- Here is how we will inform you of health and safety risks: Omnilert, website, social media. We will keep you informed in a timely manner.
- Faculty should seek ways to provide education online or in alternative methodologies where possible.
- Ways to cope with anxiety with accurate information and available resources (EAP)
- Please let the college know if you're ill. It gives us a better understanding of potential health risks for our college community. *(Recommend HR be the "keeper" of tracking how many people are out. Supervisors should send them info.)*

- SPSCC is committed to student and employee safety. We will act with an abundance of caution should any risk to the college become known.
- Explain what SPSCC is doing to prepare for continuity of operations should the college need to close.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS FOR DIRECT EXPOSURE

When a SPSCC employee or student or campus visitor may have been exposed to COVID-19, is being tested for COVID-19, is in quarantine for COVID-19, or has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Strategies for Direct Exposure Incident

1. Provide daily updates at a set time to students, faculty, and staff. Even when there's no new news. Prioritize this information, even if it's only a possible exposure, to try to reduce rumors and inaccurate information.
2. Update websites, social media frequently.
3. Provide clear health official links for health information
4. Use Omnilert alerts if case is confirmed and closure or suspended operations ordered.
5. Immediately notify the Thurston County Public Health Department. Ask for assistance with communication for students, faculty, and staff. Seek guidance on facility closure recommendations
6. Ask employees to prepare to work off campus, if possible. Keep students home while cleaning occurs and until health officials recommend re-opening.
7. Signage on building doors if closure is required.

Key Messages:

- SPSCC is working closely with the Washington State Department of Health and Thurston County Public Health and following their guidance in our response.
- SPSCC has a plan to continue operations, if possible, if the college needs to close temporarily. We are doing everything we can to continue providing education, but the priority needs to be safety.
- SPSCC is doing its best to provide information as quickly as possible, but there are a number of questions we can't immediately answer or we're waiting on test results/information. We will provide updates as frequently as we can.
- We understand this is stressful and encourage you to follow our official communication channels and official health resources rather than paying attention to rumors. Accurate information is important.
- We know there are many questions about when we will re-open or how each faculty member will address the time lost in their course. We will not have all the answers immediately but will work to share information as we receive it and our faculty will try to continue communications with students if possible.
- Provide detailed information about safety and cleaning protocols before re-opening.