

SUBJECT LINE: Important Information about Costa Rica Global Learning Program

March 13, 2020

Dear Costa Rica Parents,

As many of you know, every semester we have students studying abroad in a number of locations, and this semester is no exception where we have students in Vienna, Florence and Costa Rica. These programs can be one of the most enriching and life-changing experiences a college student can have during their academic program at Lipscomb! Whether our students are studying on our campus or in locations thousands of miles away from Nashville, our goal of keeping our students safe and secure remains a primary focus.

This semester has been a very eventful semester given the increase worldwide of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The Lipscomb leadership team has been monitoring the COVID-19 situation around the world on a daily basis, particularly as it relates to our global learning programs this semester. And, in recent days, the virus has been identified in Costa Rica.

As part of our daily monitoring, our normal process includes reviewing and following the guidance provided by our expert partners, including the U.S. Department of State, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and International SOS (ISOS) along with local laws and orders in the impacted areas on how to treat and respond to this situation.

Because of the travel changes announced by President Trump earlier this week and the related increase in the risk level worldwide by both the U.S. Department of State and the CDC, we have decided to bring our students in Europe home early and they will be arriving in the U.S. Friday evening.

As conditions continue to change rapidly worldwide and given all of our options and considerations for the health and well-being of our students, **it is with our students' best interest in mind, that we have decided to end our study abroad Costa Rica program this week.** Please know that this decision is not made lightly or without our own sadness for the students' shortened study abroad experience. The health and safety of our students, faculty, site directors, staff and families is of utmost importance to all of us. And, although we are saddened that our students cannot stay in Costa Rica for the entire semester, we are grateful for the journey they have taken and the time they have had thus far.

The Office of Global Learning will make all travel arrangements for the return flights home for students with a goal of returning all students to the U.S. by the end of the weekend. Students will be notified of their specific flight arrangements. We are planning on bringing students home on Monday. After they return to the U.S. and have a few days to settle in and get reacclimated, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Global Learning will

coordinate the resumption of the academic curriculum for each student to ensure that they receive the full semester of academic credits for which they are registered. We commit to working very diligently and intentionally to support each and every student during this transition time. **Please note that per the CDC, those returning from Costa Rica should monitor their health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning from travel.** You can learn more about the CDC policy at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/coronavirus-global>.

While we believe returning the students to the U.S. is the right decision at this time, we are very sorry for the extenuating circumstances that will not allow the further extension of the study abroad program in Costa Rica. If you have any specific questions about this situation, please contact **Dr. Rebecca Zanolini**, director of global learning, at rebecca.zanolini@lipscomb.edu or 615.440.8196.

Please be in prayer with all of us for all of our students and faculty in Costa Rica as they prepare to return to the U.S. over the next few days.

Blessings,

Randy Lowry
President