



The University of Texas System

Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.

Office of the Chancellor

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April 22, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO:

Presidents, The University of Texas System

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FROM:

Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.

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SUBJECT:

Effective Immediately: International Travel and Program Requirements

Risks associated with travel abroad and other international activities rise as global expansion increases. These activities include, but are not limited to, study abroad programs, overseas work on government contracts and grants, research programs in foreign countries, and the operation of international locations. Each of these presents unique exposures and requires equally unique programs to help mitigate associated risks.

University of Texas students, faculty, and staff traveling on university business or university-sponsored programs, around the world, are vulnerable to exposures from weather catastrophes, political unrest, terrorism, criminal activity, or many other potential risks. Recent developments in Mexico have been particularly concerning and have resulted in suspension of certain programs, and the recent eruption of the volcano in Iceland has created chaos and disrupted air travel throughout Europe.

After consultation with leadership at U. T. System Administration, I have concluded that a formalized process, with certain requirements, is necessary to ensure all international travel and programs are evaluated and associated risks are understood. These measures will provide for a consistent approach with each institution maintaining autonomous decision-making authority regarding trips and programs.

Effective immediately, the following are required at all U. T. System institutions:

- Creation of an International Oversight Committee (IOC)
- Automatic suspension of programs and travel to countries (including Mexico) where a travel warning has been issued by the U.S. Department of State, unless a specific exemption is approved by the institutions IOC. *Note: The U.S. Department of State website indicates that travel warnings are issued when long-term protracted conditions make a country dangerous or unstable. A travel warning may also be issued by the U. S. Government when their ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.*
- Mandatory registration with International SOS for faculty, staff, and all students traveling internationally on university-sponsored trips prior to travel
- Completion of International Travel Survey by May 17, 2010.

International Oversight Committee

The International Oversight Committee (IOC) shall be comprised of members appointed by the president of the institution. The attached white paper, originally issued by the Office of Strategic Management in December 2008 for study abroad, and modified to reflect all international activity, explains the role and responsibilities of the IOC. The IOC should consider and evaluate any university activity or travel to countries or regions in which a warning has been issued by the U.S. Department of State or where significant health or safety concerns are present.

The white paper specifically addresses relevant best practices for committee oversight, criteria for suspension of programs, exemptions, waivers and insurance requirements, and non-university programs. It is intended to provide guidance for the development of the IOC at your institutions.

Automatic Suspension to Countries with Travel Warnings

If the U.S. Department of State issues a travel warning, any program not started and any participant or employee planned travel that has not occurred are automatically suspended pending review by the IOC. Programs or travel in progress when the warning is issued should be evaluated immediately by the IOC to determine whether the threat is imminent and personnel and students should be recalled.

The IOC should perform a thorough risk assessment, which demonstrates that adequate safeguards are in place, before any exemptions to automatic suspension are granted. Travel warnings can be found by visiting the U.S. Department of State travel page at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

International SOS

International SOS, a comprehensive, 24-hour medical, emergency, and security response organization provides medical and security evacuation services, email alerts, as well as country guides to their subscribers. Subscription to International SOS has been in place since 2005 for all business or university-sponsored travel, and travelers are automatically enrolled when utilizing one of the U. T. System-contracted travel services. Personal memberships are available at a discount for traveling companions and employees traveling abroad for leisure.

A full description of the services offered by International SOS and registration is available through the U. T. System portal at <http://www.internationalsos.com>. In the space indicated for log in, please utilize the U. T. System Membership Number 11BSGC000037.

An additional service included with International SOS is the Traveler Locator Service (TLS). TLS provides SOS the information they need, up front, to locate and contact U. T. travelers if necessary and allows U. T. to access the system so we know the countries, cities, flights, and travel plans in the case that an event occurs. As noted earlier, enrollment with International SOS is automatic if travelers utilize a U. T.-contracted travel agency. When a non-contracted travel agency is used, the traveler must take the time to manually enroll by accessing the U. T. portal for International SOS.

It is imperative that we are aware of where our employees and students are if a significant event occurs that might require immediate attention. Institutions must implement the necessary processes to ensure anyone traveling on university business or programs is enrolled in the International SOS system.

International Travel Survey

The U. T. System Office of Risk Management (ORM) has implemented programs and offered services, such as International SOS; international package insurance, which provides foreign coverage for auto exposures; commercial general liability; workers' compensation/employers liability; and Defense Base Act (DBA) coverage. For underwriting purposes, carriers require that the System gather, centrally maintain, and report data related to all international travel and all known government contracts (including applicable grants) annually. The last survey for this purpose was conducted in March 2009.

Attached is a spreadsheet related to faculty, staff, and student travel (including study abroad trips) that must be completed by all institutions. Please use data applicable to travel conducted during Fiscal Year 2009 when completing this survey. To ensure the thoroughness of the data, we ask that you assign responsibility of this survey to one individual who will work with various representatives on your campus—including contracts and grants staff, travel coordinators, international

program directors, Risk Management Advisory Committee representatives, and any other appropriate staff—to collect the data and complete the spreadsheets. The survey should be completed no later than May 17 and directed to the attention of Ms. Tracy Seiler at tseiler@utsystem.edu. Questions related to the survey may also be addressed to Ms. Seiler. Other questions may be directed to the Office of Risk Management, 512-499-4578, Mr. Phillip Dendy, pdendy@utsystem.edu, or Mr. Paul Pousson, ppousson@utsystem.edu.

I appreciate your support in ensuring these programs and procedures are implemented at your institutions. Safety of our faculty, staff, and students is of the utmost concern to me and to our Regents.

FGC/jbp

Attachments

cc: Executive Officers
Mr. Phillip B. Dendy
Mr. Paul D. Pousson
Ms. Tracy L. Seiler
Risk Management Executive Committee
Risk Management Advisory Committee
Chief Business Officers
Global Advisory Group
U. T. System Travel Council