Date: 3/1/2020

Subject: UAlbany Update for students studying abroad in Milan, Italy

Text:

Given the most recent changes in the status of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in northern Italy, the University at Albany is taking steps to address safety and potential future travel issues for all UAlbany spring study abroad programs in Milan. More specifically, we are strongly recommending that all students participating in UAlbany study abroad programs in Milan, Italy return to the United States as soon as possible. The University does not make this decision lightly. However, late this afternoon the U.S. Department of State raised the travel advisory to “Level 4: Do Not Travel” in the Lombardy and Veneto regions of Italy and the CDC raised their health alert warning to “Level 3, Avoid Nonessential Travel.”

The safety of our students is our primary concern. These escalations by the U.S. government helped guide our decision to recommend that you return to the U.S. as soon as possible. For those of you who are not UAlbany students, your home study abroad advisor has been notified of this decision. We recommend that you update your return airline ticket as soon as possible as finding flights home from Milan may become more difficult over time. UAlbany will reimburse you for any change fees, with proper receipt. When you have booked your return flight, please provide your flight itinerary to your study abroad advisor Jay Stokes (jstokes@albany.edu). We are asking that you return to your permanent home, follow the health advice recommended below, and not return to the UAlbany campus at this time. Please adjust your travel plans accordingly. If you believe that it is unadvisable for you to return home for any reason, please contact your study abroad advisor, and we will work with you to devise an alternative plan.

We are not suspending the academic aspects of the UAlbany study abroad programs in Milan, Italy as we are working with the respective Universities about students continuing their studies online at these institutions for the remainder of the spring semester if possible. Your host institutions recognize that many U.S. students will be departing in the coming days and they are working quickly to determine which, if any, of your classes can continue online through the rest of the semester. However, should the host institutions not be able to arrange continued online study for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, UAlbany would need to formally suspend the academic piece of the study abroad programs and students seek other academic options. In addition, there may be courses at the host institution that cannot be continued online, such as those with laboratory components.

As described in yesterday's email, UAlbany is ready to assist you with available course options at home. While UAlbany cannot guarantee all necessary courses needed or wanted by returning students this semester, we are already working to identify options both at UAlbany and at other Albany area institutions of higher education.
UAlbany students, your contact to explore academic options domestically is John Donoghue (jdonoghue@albany.edu). Additionally, you can also explore summer course offerings at UAlbany or for transfer credit at other universities, or return to UAlbany in the fall by contacting Anna Karlsson (akarlsson@albany.edu). Please include the subject line “Study Abroad Urgent Request” in your email.

Any academic decision you make outside of continuing in your study abroad program courses as available or other courses for the spring 2020 semester may carry financial aid implications. These implications will vary by individual situation. Again, UAlbany cannot guarantee that all financial aid implications can be mitigated, but we are already working to address these concerns. Please contact either Earl Tretheway (etretheway@albany.edu), Rachael Cofresi (rcofresi@albany.edu), Meryl Schwalb (mschwalb@albany.edu), or Stephen Kudzin (skudzin@albany.edu) and include the subject line “Study Abroad Urgent Request” in your email.

- Upon returning home: If you do not have any symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19, you may self-isolate and contact your personal physician or University Student Health Services at 518-442-5229 during regular business hours before going to see your personal physician.

- If you exhibit symptoms associated with the novel coronavirus, please self-isolate and contact your personal physician or University Student Health Services at 518-442-5229 if it is during regular business hours before going to your doctor’s office or any health care office. If you arrive home on a weekend or after hours, please contact your local county Health Department to discuss next steps.

- You may contact UAlbany Student Health Services at 518-442-5529 during regular business hours for health related questions or assistance.

The University understands this is a difficult situation and we are here to support you throughout this transition. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We will continue to update you regularly as efforts to find academic solutions for impacted students continue.