Back in April 2020, the Vice President for Finance and Administration issued an essential only spending directive to the University community. This directive was to align with a mandate from SUNY System Administration (SUNY) and the New York State Division of Budget (DOB) that required State agencies to reduce spending to the most basic needs. To comply with this directive, the University took several actions, which included limiting spending authority on procurement and travel cards, along with requiring a purchase justification for procurements.

As you may recall, the directive specified that the University will process only essential expenditures that are:

- Health and/or safety related
- Mission critical to University operations
- Legally binding, including agreements that provide revenue to offset expenditures

As of today, SUNY has not removed this essential spending only directive. It remains unclear when that directive will be sunset, so as a University community we will continue to adhere to this mandate.

We do recognize that, in limited circumstances, business travel may be required. The University still recommends that faculty, staff and students avoid traveling as much as possible, especially to regions impacted by COVID-19. **Effective immediately**, in order to travel, the employee will be required to complete a travel pre-approval form found at: [University Travel Procedures](#) and please take the following actions:

- Complete the travel pre-approval form **prior** to making any travel arrangements
  - If the employee travels without an approved travel form, they will risk not being reimbursed
- Obtain a Dean or Department head approval
- Obtain a Vice President or designee approval
- Once your travel is approved, please email the approval to Eileen Scanlan in Accounting at: [escanlan@albany.edu](mailto:escanlan@albany.edu)
The pre-travel approval form is required for all travel using State funds (domestic & international trips). There will be no blanket approval and completion of this form will be required with each travel engagement. If the employees’ job is dependent on reoccurring travel, please contact Eileen Scanlan to discuss the situation. This should be an exception, not the norm.

If traveling international, it is important to follow the University procedures: Faculty and Staff International Travel Policy. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the department to understand the true cost of the travel and identify this on the travel pre-approval form. International travel may incur additional costs, such as extra lodging to comply with a country’s mandate that the traveler quarantine upon arrival in the country.

To aid in travel planning, below are a few helpful links to review before submitted a request.

- U.S. Department of State alerts and warnings website
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention ravel health notices
- New York State Office of the Governor executive orders about any bans on State-funded travel (see current press releases)

I understand that this process may be cumbersome, however we must take appropriate actions and recognize spending restraints are in place. Thank you for your cooperation.

cc.
A. Tyson
E. Scanlan