Welcome to Campus Weekly

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Classes and more

The University is closely monitoring the rapidly changing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in coordination with the Chancellor’s Office, Provost’s Office, Student Health, and UNCG Emergency Management. UNCG has established a website to provide updated information and university announcements related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). It will be updated as additional guidance becomes available from those offices, public health officials, and the UNC System.

The site includes links, resources, and other information to help our community stay informed. It is not intended to replace student health services or other emergency information channels.
Keep teaching, keep working: tips for a remote life

UNC Greensboro has guides for both faculty and staff on maintaining your working life from home.

Staff can find tips and resources concerning Google Suite, videoconferencing, and more about teleworking on this site.

The webpage is designed to help UNCG staff prepare for and positively approach working remotely. The information provided helps ensure our ability to meet the needs of our campus community when we can’t physically be on campus.

Faculty can find tips on transitioning face-to-face courses to online courses and building the online environment on this site.

Here, faculty can find guidance on how to best communicate with students and your department, revise and share your syllabus, and get help with strategies for managing lectures, discussions, presentations, assignments, and exams.
Public health expert: COVID-19 and social distancing

Dr. Jennifer Toller Erausquin

Traducción al español más abajo

What is social distancing, and why is it important? How is COVID-19 causing other public health concerns? And what’s the best way to stay up-to-date with what’s going on?

As we face a global outbreak of the novel coronavirus, and a rising number of cases here in the United States, there are a lot of questions when it comes to COVID-19, public health, and preventive measures.

In the Q&A below, Dr. Jennifer Toller Erausquin, an assistant professor in the Dept. of Public Health Education at UNC Greensboro, discusses COVID-19 from a public health perspective.

Erausquin, a social epidemiologist, studies the way social determinants – such as social structures, institutions, and relationships – affect distributions or patterns of disease among populations. While most of Erausquin’s work is focused on HIV, many of the public health issues she considers as part of her HIV research also apply to COVID-19.

Why is social distancing an important public health measure?
With COVID-19 being a new virus, a lot of the information that we’re getting – about transmission modes, the infectious period, and even symptoms – is new at every step of the way. Our understanding of things is changing, but what we do understand is that the virus is very contagious. That means that it’s easily spread from person to person, or through surfaces.

The public health measures for slowing the spread of the virus are largely focused on social distancing. In this case, social distancing means allowing more space between people and sharing items less. The cancellations of large gatherings are reasonable steps in the middle of a very contagious new outbreak as a way of slowing the epidemic. We don’t think it will be possible to completely stop the epidemic in its tracks right now. The measures that are in place are an attempt to slow it.

A lot of this is related to the capacity of the U.S. health care system. With this particular virus, not everyone who contracts the virus will get seriously sick, but some groups of people will. So we expect more people in our hospitals who need critical care and specialized equipment like ventilators. If there is a large increase of serious coronavirus cases in a very concentrated period of time, our health system won’t be able to meet the needs of an influx of patients. It would also make it hard for people who have other serious health conditions who need those hospital beds, but don’t have coronavirus.

This creates some big challenges and uncomfortable changes for the general public, but I do think it’s necessary for us to be able to manage this outbreak.

**How may these preventive measures result in other public health concerns?**

Here in Guilford County, there is a large number of kids who receive free or reduced lunch and other important services through their schools. North Carolina has yet to cancel school for K-12 students, but if that happens, there are clearly potential implications for child health – for adequate nutrition and for other social/support services that students and their families may receive through the schools. Not having these services available is a serious concern. I’m not involved in conversations about how to mitigate these impacts, but I know that these conversations are taking place.

Another concern with school closures and workplaces being closed is child and elder care. It also creates financial implications for vulnerable groups. Not all hourly workers have paid sick leave or adequate sick leave. As our economy increasingly moves toward a consultant-based or gig economy, those jobs rarely include paid sick leave.

**Do you think COVID-19 will change how we view public health moving forward?**
Public health often has hidden functions. They happen in the background, and yet they save so many lives. For example, infection control measures in hospitals have completely changed our ability to provide safe and effective medical treatments we now take for granted. Vaccines are a huge boon and have been incredibly important for child health.

I hope that these public health measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 will be viewed positively in the future, and that the field of public health will be viewed positively.

It’s quite possible that because we have implemented these infection control measures, including social distancing and the cancelling of events, we will have a pretty flat epidemic curve in some areas of the country. That would be fantastic, and that would be a sign that the public health measures have worked – not that we did them in vain.

What do you think of universities, including UNCG, moving instruction to an online format?

I think the movement of most classes to an online format is appropriate as a preventive measure for our students and our faculty and staff as well. Reducing the number of large group meetings – of any kind – is really effective.

As far as we know, we are at an early stage in North Carolina and in Greensboro. However, given the way that younger populations tend to have milder symptoms, and because we’re also in cold and flu season, and at the beginning of allergy season, it’s a little hard to distinguish. I think this was the appropriate response, although it is certainly a burden on our students and our faculty.

I don’t think this is a time for anyone to panic. But I do think that doing what we can now is going to avoid a lot of problems down the road.

How can people make sure they are getting the most up-to-date information?

The best sources for up-to-date information on all aspects of COVID-19 are the World Health Organization coronavirus website and the coronavirus pages of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

I myself, through social media, have been sent information, tips, and lists of symptoms that are inaccurate. I’m really interested in accurate information getting out to the public.

I was reading an article this morning, and it said to stay calm, stay informed, and wash your hands. And I think that’s probably the best advice.

To follow university updates as they relate to COVID-19, visit go.unCG.edu/coronavirus.
Dra. Jennifer Toller Erausquin, experta en salud pública: COVID-19 y la distancia social

¿Qué es la distancia social, y por qué es importante? ¿En qué manera el COVID-19 está causando otros retos a la salud pública? ¿Y cuál es la mejor manera para mantenerse informado y actualizado con esta epidemia?

A medida que nos enfrentamos a la epidemia mundial del nuevo coronavirus, y a medida que el número de casos aquí en los Estados Unidos crece, hay muchas preguntas cuando se trata de COVID-19, salud pública, y métodos preventivos.

En este artículo de preguntas y respuestas, Dra. Jennifer Toller Erausquin, profesora asistente en el Departamento de la Educación de Salud Pública en UNC Greensboro, habla del COVID-19 desde una perspectiva de salud pública.

Erausquin, una epidemióloga social, estudia la manera en que los determinantes sociales - como las estructuras sociales, las instituciones, y las relaciones – afectan a la distribución de las enfermedades entre la población. Aunque la mayoría del trabajo de Erausquin está enfocado en HIV, muchos temas de salud pública que ella estudia también aplican al COVID-19.

¿Por qué la distancia social como medida es importante a la salud pública?

Por lo que COVID-19 es un virus nuevo, mucha de la información que estamos recibiendo - sobre medios de transmisión, el período de infección, y los síntomas - es nueva. Nuestro conocimiento sobre la epidemia está cambiando, pero lo que sí entendemos es que el virus es muy contagioso. Esto significa que es muy fácil de contagiar de persona a persona, o a través de diferentes superficies.

La mayoría de los métodos de salud pública para desacelerar la dispersión del virus se enfocan en practicar lo que llamamos la “distancia social.” En este caso, distancia social significa dejar más espacio entre las personas y evitar compartir objetos. Las cancelaciones de eventos con mucha gente son razonables, ya que esta epidemia es extremadamente contagiosa.

Una gran parte del problema está relacionada con la capacidad del sistema de salud de los
Estados Unidos. Con este virus en particular, no todos los que contraigan el virus tendrán secuelas graves, pero algunos grupos sí. Por lo tanto, el brote epidémico de COVID-19 provocará que más personas precisan de cuidado intensivo y equipo especializado en nuestros hospitales. Si hay un gran aumento de casos serios del coronavirus en un período concentrado de tiempo, el sistema de salud no podrá satisfacer las necesidades de los pacientes. Además, podría ser difícil para los que tienen otros problemas de salud muy serios, sin relación al coronavirus, y necesitan las camas del hospital.

Esto crea retos grandes y cambios incómodos para el público general, pero sí creo que es necesario para poder manejar esta epidemia.

¿Cómo las medidas preventivas pueden resultar en otras preocupaciones de salud pública?

Aquí en el condado de Guilford, hay muchos niños que reciben almuerzo gratis o descontado y otros servicios importantes por medio de las escuelas. Aún las escuelas de Carolina del Norte no han cerrado para los estudiantes, pero si llegan a cerrar, habrá consecuencias potenciales para la salud de los niños – para la alimentación adecuada y otros servicios de apoyo que estudiantes y sus familias reciben por medio de las escuelas. No poder tener acceso a estos servicios es una preocupación muy grave. En estos días hay personas que están evaluando cómo mitigar estos impactos.

Otra preocupación con el cierre de colegios y trabajos es cuidado para niños y personas mayores. También crea repercusiones financieras para grupos vulnerables. No todos los empleados – incluso los que trabajan por ahora, los jornaleros, y los contratistas – tienen días de enfermedad pagos o licencia de enfermedad adecuada. A medida que nuestra economía progresa hacia una economía de contratistas, estos trabajos raramente incluyen días de enfermedad pagos.

¿Tú crees que el COVID-19 cambiará cómo vemos a la salud pública de aquí en adelante?

La salud pública frecuentemente tiene funciones escondidas. Pasan desapercibidas aunque salven muchas vidas. Por ejemplo, las medidas para controlar infecciones en hospitales han cambiado totalmente nuestra habilidad de ofrecer servicios médicos seguros y efectivos que ahora se toman por dados. Las vacunas son una gran ayuda y son increíblemente importantes para la salud de los niños.

Espero que el campo de salud pública, y estas medidas que se han tomado, diseñadas para ayudar a desacelerar la dispersión del COVID-19, puedan ser vistos como algo positivo en el futuro.
Es posible que al implementar estas medidas de control de infección, incluyendo la distancia social y la cancelación de eventos, que tengamos una curva epidémica plana en algunas partes del país. Esto sería fantástico, y sería una señal de que las medidas de la salud pública han servido – y que no se tomaron en vano.

¿Qué piensas de las universidades, incluso UNCG, que están convirtiendo sus clases a una plataforma virtual?

Creo que cambiar las clases a una plataforma virtual es medida preventiva adecuada para nuestros estudiantes, facultad, y personal. Reducir el número de reuniones grandes – de cualquier tipo – es muy efectivo.

En Carolina del Norte y en Greensboro, estamos en una etapa del brote muy temprana por lo que sabemos. Sin embargo, debido a que los menores de edad suelen tener síntomas más leves, también estamos en temporada de gripe y al principio los síntomas se confunden con alergias, es un poco difícil de distinguir. Creo que es la respuesta correcta, aunque sin duda es una carga para nuestros estudiantes y facultad.

No creo que sea el momento de sentir pánico. Pero sí creo que hacer lo que podemos ahora nos ayudará a evitar problemas en el futuro.

¿Cómo puedes asegurarte que estés recibiendo la información más actualizada?

Las mejores fuentes para información actualizada en todos los aspectos del COVID-19 es la página web de coronavirus de la Organización Mundial de la Salud y la página web de coronavirus de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades.

Yo, a través de las redes sociales, he recibido información, sugerencias y listas de síntomas que no han sido precisas. Me importa mucho la difusión de información correcta y científica al público.

Estaba leyendo un artículo esta mañana y decía que hay que mantenerse calmados, informados, y lavarse las manos. Y creo que es el mejor consejo.

Para seguir las últimas noticias de la universidad relacionadas al COVID-19, visita go.uncg.edu/coronavirus.

Entrevista dada por Alyssa Bedrosian, Oficina de Comunicación
Fotografía por Martin W. Kane, Oficina de Comunicación
Coronavirus information for faculty and staff

UNCG wants to be sure you know where to find information and how to best follow this fast-moving situation.

The most important thing is to regularly check the dedicated Coronavirus website. Bookmark it for easy access. UNCG will update it frequently.

Please monitor your email as updates will be shared as often as possible. There are as many unique situations as there are unique students, and we will communicate as frequently and transparently as possible.

Please make sure that you download our UNCG Mobile app for your phone from the iTunes App store or the Google Play app store. This is an easy way to access news and we will push notifications to your device when they are important.

Follow us for updates on the following social media channels; this may be the fastest way to stay up-to-date as we communicate:

Twitter: @UNCG (Twitter.com/UNCG)
Facebook: Facebook.com/uncg1891
Instagram: @uncg (Instagram.com/UNCG)

UNCG understands this is a stressful time and appreciates that faculty and staff are focused at every level on ensuring the health and safety of our students, from helping them navigate this complicated environment, to making decisions that always put students’ interests first.

I-Fest and Science Everywhere canceled for 2020

As the University closely monitors the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, in order to best protect the health of UNC Greensboro students, faculty, staff, and community members, difficult decisions have been made regarding two major campus events. While the threat in North Carolina is currently considered relatively low, our highest priority remains the health and safety of our UNCG family.

Consistent with decisions being made around a number of community events, UNCG has made the decision to cancel this year’s International Festival, which was scheduled for April 4. UNCG’s 2020 Science Everywhere festival, scheduled for April 25, has also been canceled.

Both events will return in 2021.
The University and decision-makers want to thank all who volunteered to participate in these outstanding festivals, including students, faculty, staff, community partners, campus organizations, and other supporters. Their efforts thus far have shown UNCG’s commitments to global learning and hands-on science education for all ages.

Please visit our Coronavirus website for the latest information on our campus response.

The UNC System and the NC Department of Health and Human Services recommends that organizers of events that draw more than 100 people should cancel, postpone, modify these events or offer online streaming services. UNCG is postponing, cancelling, or virtualizing many in-person events. This includes recruitment events, tours, student programs, reunions, performances, conferences and social events. For details on specific event decisions, please check the websites of the hosting department or unit.

Quick Look: March 17, 2020

If your event has been previously announced in Quick Look, and you would like to indicate that it will be rescheduled or encourage alternate online participation, please email sckirbys@uncg.edu

- For the foreseeable future, any UNCG event or gathering that would assemble 10 or more people in a single space will be postponed or canceled. In line with
recommendations about social distancing, it is strongly encouraged that events or meetings be rescheduled or conducted virtually if possible. For details on specific event decisions, please check the websites of the hosting department or unit.

- All employees who can telework must begin doing so as soon as possible and no later than close of business on Wednesday, March 18. Employees who are not able to work remotely, including temporary and student employees, will receive administrative leave for time missed through March 31, 2020. Academic and office buildings will be open as usual through Friday, March 20, at 5 p.m. Beginning Friday evening, buildings will be secured as they are during a standard University break. Employees will be required to use ID cards and/or keys to access their buildings and offices.

- The Weatherspoon Art Museum will close Wednesday, March 18 at 5 p.m. and remain closed until further notice.

- The New Student Transitions and First Year Experience (FYE) office is seeking engaging, passionate, and supportive individuals to serve as FYE Instructors for fall 2020. “FYE 101: Succeed at the G” is a two-credit, 15-week transition seminar for first-year and transfer students in their first semester at UNCG. This course gives students the opportunity to explore personal development opportunities, gain skills essential to academic success, and connect with their new community. Each FYE section is led by an FYE Instructor and a Peer Academic Leader (PAL). Class sizes are capped at 25 students to allow for a discussion-driven environment where every student plays an active role in their learning experience.

If you are interested in learning more about “FYE 101: Succeed at the G” and applying for the FYE Instructor role, please check out the “Information for FYE Instructors” at https://newstudents.uncg.edu/yfy/succeed-at-the-g/. The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. on March 22nd.

If you know of a colleague who may be interested in the FYE Instructor role, please recommend them here: go.uncg.edu/fyeinstructornomination2020 so they can receive more information. For questions, contact Emily Wiersma, Associate Director of New Student Transitions and First Year Experience, at e_wiersm@uncg.edu.

- The Staff Senate Scholarship will offer awards in 2020-21 for a permanent employee with five years of service to the state, or an eligible dependent. Requirements for eligibility, along with the form to apply are available here. The deadline to apply is May 15, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

- Ready to make someone a Staff Star? The Staff Recognition Committee encourages all staff to nominate employees whom they observe being kind, thoughtful, helpful, or
considerate. Complete the Staff Star nomination form.

- The Kendon Smith Lecture Series event, “Remembering Everyday Events: Mechanisms of Mind and Brain,” scheduled for March 26 and 27, has been postponed.

- The Lunch and Learn “Gerontology is GROing: What’s New with the Graduate Programs,” scheduled for March 19, will be postponed until the fall semester.

Graduate programs recognized by U.S. News & World Report

UNC Greensboro’s graduate programs have been recognized in the U.S. News & World Report’s 2021 Best Graduate Schools rankings.

Several programs across academic disciplines rank in the top 50 of their respective categories.

UNCG’s graduate programs in Counseling and Educational Development (CED) continue to receive high marks, jumping from No. 6 last year and ranking No. 3 nationally and No. 1 in North Carolina.
The Master of Library and Information Studies ranks No. 22 nationally and No. 2 in North Carolina.

UNCG’s graduate programs in speech pathology also rank in the top 50 – No. 45 nationally and No. 2 in the state.

Additionally, the School of Nursing moved up 23 spots from last year’s ranking to No. 47 in the Best Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Programs. UNCG’s Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program jumped 22 spots from a year ago to No. 48. UNCG stands as one of only three North Carolina universities with both an MSN program and a DNP program ranked in the top 50, joining Duke University and UNC Chapel Hill.

UNCG was also recognized in the following ranking lists:

- Best Business Schools
- Part-time MBA
- Best Education Schools
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Clinical Psychology
- English
- Best Fine Arts Programs
- History
- Nursing-Anesthesia
- Psychology
- Best Public Affairs Programs
- Public Health
- Social Work

To learn more, visit the U.S. News & World Report profile of UNCG.

For more information about UNCG’s Graduate School, visit grs.uncg.edu.

Dr. Qibin Zhang

Dr. Qibin Zhang (Translational Biomedical Research) received an NIH R01 grant, titled “Protein Markers to Islet Autoimmunity and T1D Progression,” from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). Currently, Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) affects approximately 1.4 million people in the U.S. The proposed research will identify novel protein markers that can predict T1D and gain further insight into the pathogenesis of this disease.
Zhang has also received a Collaborative Sciences Award from the American Heart Association through collaboration with scientists from the University of Colorado, School of Medicine. The goal of the award is to identify novel glycated protein and metabolite markers to better predict progression of coronary artery calcium before onset of cardiovascular diseases in the Type 1 Diabetes population.

Zhang earned his bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Shandong Normal University, China, and PhD in analytical chemistry from the University of California at Riverside. He also completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Zhang is co-director of the Center for Translational Biomedical Research in Kannapolis. The Zhang research group focuses on the development of new bioanalytical capabilities.

**Dr. Cassandra Workman**

**Dr. Cassandra Workman (Anthropology)** received new funding from North Carolina State University for the project “Commercial Partner Engagement for Trash Excluder.”

This research will entail a qualitative assessment of the barriers to and opportunities for gender equity in use of and entrepreneurship potential of the trash excluder. Qualitative methods include interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory methods such as Photovoice or photo elicitation. Researchers will include topics covered in the “Gender Inclusion in New Product Development” guide developed by the Gates Foundation. Quantitative methods will include household demographic survey and assessment of current sanitation systems, including usage and condition. Specifically, researchers are concerned with identifying pathways through which gender equity can be increased along the sanitation value chain and with specific reference to the trash excluder.

Deliverables will include technical reports and academic publication(s). Target journals include practitioner journals and discipline specific journals. All attempts will be made to publish in Ghanaian journals and journals accessible to practitioners in Ghana.
Dr. Minjeong Kim

Dr. Minjeong Kim (Computer Science) received new funding from UNC Chapel Hill for the project “A Scalable Platform for Exploring and Analyzing Whole Brain Tissue Cleared Images.”

Public Health Relevance
This proposal aims to develop a next-generation cell segmentation engine for whole-brain tissue cleared images. The researchers’ proposed work is built upon their previous 2D nuclear segmentation project using deep-learning techniques. However, they found that their current computational tool is limited in 2D segmentation scenarios and insufficient in annotated training samples.

To address these limitations, researchers will first develop a cloud-based semi-automatic annotation tool with the capacity of virtual reality. Their annotation tool is designed to be cross-platform, which allows them to partner with “SciStarter” (the largest citizen science projects in the world) and acquire large amount of cell annotations from science-enthusiastic volunteers. Meanwhile, researchers will develop a next-generation 3D cell segmentation engine using an end-to-end fully-connected convolution neural network. To facilitate 3D cell segmentation, researchers will also develop a super-resolution method to impute an isotropic high-resolution image from a low-resolution microscopy image.

After the development of a 3D cell segmentation engine, researchers will continue to improve its generality by developing a transfer-learning framework which enables them to rapidly deploy their 3D cell segmentation engine to the novel microscopy images without the time-consuming manual annotation step.

Finally, researchers will apply their segmentation tool to visualize and quantify brain structure differences within genetically-characterized mouse and human brain tissue at UNC Neuroscience Center.

At the end of this project, researchers will release the software (both binary program and
source code) and the 3D cell annotations in order to facilitate similar neuroscience studies at other institutes. Considering the importance of high-throughput computational tools in quantifying three-dimensional brain structure, this cutting-edge technique will be very useful in the neuroscience research community.