

Dear LSC Campus Employees:

I want to give you a quick update on our COVID Preparedness Plan in action and to give you a quick fact-confirming challenge strategy.

As expected, the number of cases at LSC has risen and will likely continue to rise (see the Minnesota State [dashboard](#) for details). We are carefully monitoring that and the number of confirmed cases in St. Louis County. That said, we have prepared for this possibility and have followed our [preparedness plan](#). And while the procedures we use are constantly a work in progress, the overall plan is working and the community spread has been vastly minimized.

Here is what happens when we get a report of a case or exposure:

Per our plan, we follow procedures to close spaces for the specified amount of time then do a deeper cleaning/disinfection depending upon the scope of exposure. Reports of student cases or exposures are referred to the Dean of Students who follows his procedure for reporting, follow up, and contacting the appropriate VP and Dean as necessary. Reports of employee cases or exposures go to our Executive HR Director who follows her procedure for reporting, follow up, and contacting the appropriate VP and supervisor as necessary. In all of this, our COVID-19 campus contact is also informed (VP for External Relations and Advancement).

We send folks home when they have been exposed to a confirmed case, have had other possible exposures, or need to telework to allow for cleaning and again, there is some variation in quarantine or wait-time depending upon the kind and duration of the exposure or symptoms. Most of these have turned out negative for COVID exposure (with many due to seasonal allergies, etc.). We notify those departments, supervisors, and our facilities staff **who need to know**.

We **do not notify the entire campus** with every nuance of the reports, but we do report all lab-confirmed cases. Those show up in our dashboard.

The challenge:

Because we have people in areas adjacent to places that have been closed or who have had conversations with friends in impacted areas or maybe even have overheard something; we have some folks getting nervous that they do not know what is happening. We have a few folks who want to “fill in” missing information, which leads to confusion and misunderstandings. Lately, many of these partial reports have been spreading and, until the facts are gathered, the partial reports are taken as truth. That is not helping anything, including our stress levels. Yet, this is a neither good nor bad, political or apolitical. It is just a common human response.

One simple six-step strategy:

With the proliferation of fake news everywhere, we have learned to be skeptical about everything, *unless* the news being shared speaks to our personal beliefs, hopes, or even our worst fears. Then we tend to believe it! Again, this is a neither good nor bad, political or apolitical. It is just a common human response.

There are fact-checking websites, Socratic questioning techniques for exposing truth and non-truth, and even truth-o-meters (the latter really is a thing, ... or is it? Google and find out but check your sources – (smile)).

I found a good short article with six simple steps to follow when you hear something disturbing or frightening, but wonder if it is real or if you have the whole story. The link to the short article is here: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/fake-news.htm>

A summary of the steps and a short narrative on context is reproduced here (my highlights):

Fake news refers to deliberate untruths, or stories that contain some truth but which aren't completely accurate, by accident or design.

Some people also claim that truthful stories are "fake news," just because they don't agree with them. This can lead to the dangerous ignoring of vital advice.

Fake news can have a negative impact on workplace behavior. For example, by damaging learning culture, and causing rumor and mistrust to spread. So, it's vital to know how to separate the real from the fake. You can do this by following these six steps:

1. Develop a critical mindset.
2. Check the source.
3. See who else is reporting the story.
4. Examine the evidence.
5. Don't take images at face value.
6. Check that it "sounds right." (from Mindtools. Available at: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/fake-news.htm>)

So keep yourself informed. Keep practicing masking indoors and in groups, wash hands often, practice physical distancing, avoid large gatherings, and monitor your health. Watch for periodic updates on our LSC COVID response and view the Minnesota State dashboard. Check your facts and work the plan.

We've got this!

Patricia L. Rogers, Ph.D.

President

Lake Superior College

Pronouns: She, Her, Hers -- [More about pronouns](#)

