



Wilfrid Laurier University

Influenza Pandemic Response Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Influenza Pandemic: Definition¹

Influenza (commonly known as “the flu”) is a contagious virus that circulates on a yearly basis causing seasonal outbreaks of respiratory illness. Most healthy individuals are able to recover from the illness, but certain segments of the population - such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions - may experience further complications. In some instances, the disease can be fatal. As a result, influenza is an ongoing public threat.

An influenza pandemic (or “pandemic”) occurs when a strain of the flu virus changes in composition, becomes highly contagious, spreads easily from person to person and moves quickly around the world. Because the population is not immune to the new virus, it will affect more people and cause higher rates of illness and death. There were three pandemics in the 20th century (1918, 1957 and 1968). While no one knows when the next pandemic will occur, most experts believe we are overdue for such an event.

1.2 Purpose of the Influenza Pandemic Response Plan

Wilfrid Laurier University has a responsibility for the well-being of students, staff, faculty and visitors. A number of University departments regularly provide health, well-being and safety programs to the Laurier community. However, extraordinary situations can require a response beyond what the University provides. This Influenza Pandemic Response Plan has been created in order to ensure the institution is ready to respond quickly and appropriately to the threat and/or occurrence of an influenza pandemic.

The Influenza Pandemic Response Plan is designed to provide for education and awareness of the threat of a pandemic and describes an appropriate array of pandemic response roles in order to ensure the efficient mobilization and coordination of University resources. The Plan will therefore maximize efforts to provide life safety, protection of property, preservation of financial stability, and the protection of research initiatives and related animal care.

The Plan deals with a pandemic response at the broadest level, summarizing general responsibilities for University departments. It is supported by a set of more detailed plans, each of which outlines how particular University units will meet their pandemic response responsibilities.

2.0 Pandemic Response Organization

The President’s Group (PG) will oversee the political and policy aspects of the University’s pandemic response. These include:

- Approval of overall priorities and strategies
- Approval of information reports and instructions to the University community and the public
- Maintaining liaison with governments and external organizations

¹ The definition and comments under this section have been taken directly from Waterloo Region Pandemic Influenza Planning Tool Kit for Business Continuity.

The Pandemic Response Manager (PRM) is the President of the University. The PRM, or his/her delegate will have the responsibility of ensuring that the Pandemic Response Team has been formed and that the University Influenza Pandemic Response Plan has been developed, approved and, if necessary, implemented in a timely way. The Pandemic Response Manager will work closely with the University's Director of Health Services or his/her delegate and the Pandemic Response Team in the event of a pandemic. The PRM will act as chair of the Pandemic Response Team.

The Pandemic Response Team (PRT) will be the President's Advisory Committee, expanded as deemed necessary by the PRM, to include additional directors (e.g. Community Safety and Security, Environmental/Occupational Health and Safety, Health Services) or their delegates. The PRT is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Influenza Pandemic Response Plan on the campus and provides support to the Pandemic Response Manager in making decisions.

3.0 Communications

All communications to the University community at large (students, faculty and staff) and to the public regarding the University's response to an influenza pandemic must be channeled through the Director of Public Affairs and, prior to dissemination, approved by the President's Group.

3.1 Regional Considerations

The Director of Health Services will be the University's primary contact with the Region of Waterloo Public Health authority with respect to the health related issues of the pandemic. In Brantford, the Brantford Campus Medical Director or designate will consult with the Brant County Health Unit authority on the health related issues of the pandemic.

3.2 Campus and Public Communication Responsibilities

The Director of Public Affairs will play an essential communications role in informing the University community and the public in all matters regarding the University's Influenza Pandemic Response Plan and, if necessary, executing the University's planned communications response to an influenza pandemic. The Director will work closely with the Director of Physical Resources, the Director of Community Safety and Security, with the Public Relations Coordinator in Brantford, and other departmental unit heads to ensure appropriate measures are taken to facilitate the pandemic related communication initiatives on the campus.

Departmental Unit Heads will serve as the primary departmental contact in the event of a pandemic. As such, Departmental heads will:

- have a plan in place for communicating with departmental employees during a pandemic
- develop phone trees or email lists to ensure rapid and efficient communication within the department
- communicate Continuity of Operations plans with departmental employees

The Dean of Students will be responsible for ensuring that student service pandemic plans are communicated effectively, efficiently, and in a timely manner, through the Director of Public Affairs, to students and to the University community.

The Vice-President: Academic will be responsible for ensuring that pandemic related academic plans and decisions are communicated effectively, through the Director of Public Affairs, and in a timely manner to students and the university community.

4.0 Education and Training

4.1 Campus Education and Training Initiatives and Responsibilities

The development and implementation of a plan for campus-wide health and safety education and training initiatives related to a pandemic, in keeping with their respective areas of responsibilities and expertise, will be the joint responsibilities of the Director, Health Services, and the Manager, Environment/Occupational Health and Safety. The Plan will include health and safety education initiatives related to the definition of a pandemic and infection control measures that need to be implemented both immediately and during an influenza pandemic.

4.2 Administrative and Academic Unit Responsibilities

Education and training initiatives related to Continuity of Operations Plans will be the responsibility of departmental unit heads.

5.0 Plans for Continuity of Operations

5.1 Continuity of Operations Plans

A Continuity of Operations Plan (COP) will be developed for the following functions:

- Brantford Campus*
- Community Safety and Security
- Counselling Services
- Environmental/Occupational Health and Safety
- Finance and Administration
- Food Services
- Health Services
- Human Resources**
- Information Technology Services
- Laurier International
- Physical Resources
- Public Affairs
- Residential Services

* The Plan for the Brantford campus will consider a variety of functional areas at that campus.

** Human Resources will develop pandemic related human resource policies to address the following issues:

- Attendance management
- Employees at work
- Emergency scheduling (shift changes, hours of work, overtime, etc.)

Collective agreements between the University and the various unions may not adequately address pandemic related issues. The University, through Human Resources, will negotiate solutions to these issues with each relevant union body so that pandemic plans can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

Each plan will contain the following information:

- A. Primary contact person for the department (usually the departmental unit head or his/her delegates)
- B. Office location and contact information (phone number, email address) for the primary contact person
- C. Service Impact Analysis (SIA). The SIA will describe how the function will provide essential services if 33% of the workforce in the function is away from the workplace due to illness or other factors associated with the pandemic for a six week period and how the plan for the provision of essential services will change if the assumed six week period is extended up to twelve weeks.

Each SIA will identify:

- the essential services that need to be provided including any additional initiatives that need to be implemented due to the pandemic
- a list of the staff positions that are required to provide the essential services noted above
- a list of services required from other University departments to provide the essential services noted above
- a description of how the essential services will be provided, including, if necessary, a plan for cross training staff for altered roles
- the services that will be suspended
- a description of the impact of suspending specific services
- additional resources and/or financing required

Continuity of Operations plans will be reviewed annually (in May each year) by function unit heads to identify opportunities for improvement and to ensure that they meet any new demands of the organization or any newly emerging risks.

The Vice-President: Academic, or delegate, when notified by the PRM, will be responsible for the development and implementation of appropriate responses for academic units. The academic response may include alterations to the teaching and examination schedules.

The Principal/Vice-President, Brantford Campus, will be responsible for the development and implementation of a pandemic response plan for the Brantford campus.

The Vice-President Finance and Administration, or delegate, will be responsible for developing a plan for the financial health and stability of the University in the event of a pandemic. This plan will include arrangements that will need to be made in the event that the University is closed for a six to 12 week (1 academic term) period.

The Dean of Students, or delegate, when notified by the PRM will be responsible for development and implementation of appropriate responses for student service units.

The Vice-President: University Advancement, or delegate, when notified by the PRM, will be responsible for the development and implementation of appropriate University Advancement pandemic related responses.

Upon request, Human Resources will provide guidance for unit heads with respect to the development of Continuity of Operations Plans. This guidance might include meetings with unit heads and/or the provision of additional resource documentation.

5.2 Building Quarantine Plans

In the event that specific buildings on the campus are quarantined due to an influenza pandemic, the Wilfrid Laurier University Business Continuity Plan will be enacted to enable the continuity of operations for the specific functions affected.

6.0 **Health and Safety Initiatives**

The Director of Health Services will have responsibility for managing the University's medical response to the pandemic and will play a vital role in advising the PG, the PRM, the PRT, and the University Community about the pandemic and its health ramifications. The Director of Health Services will also be the primary contact with Region of Waterloo Public Health officials.

The Manager, Environment/Occupational Health and Safety will be responsible for advising University employees of their rights and responsibilities relating to health and safety in the workplace in the event of a pandemic and for ensuring that training and education is provided related to occupational health and safety.

Psychosocial Support

A pandemic will likely cause a high level of fear and anxiety among the general population. University employees will be concerned about their own health and the health of their families. University employees who deal with large numbers of people in the workplace may be concerned about potential exposure to influenza and will have questions and concerns about potential exposure on the campus and their rights relating to occupational health and safety. Informing employees of their rights, providing training and equipment as appropriate, and communicating openly about emergency planning processes will help alleviate employee anxiety.²

The University's Counseling Services Continuity of Operations Plan will include plans, strategies and measures to address psychosocial issues that will be aimed at enhancing University employees' strengths to cope with pandemic related difficulties and promote healing and recovery. In the event of a pandemic, the University, through Counseling Services, will inform employees of the services available through its Employee Assistance Program.

Personal Protective Equipment and Other infection Control Measures

The development and implementation of a plan for campus-wide utilization of personal protective equipment and infection control measures, will be the joint responsibilities of the Director, Health Services, and the Manager, Environment/Occupational Health and Safety. The Plan will include health and safety measures that need to be implemented immediately, an estimate of the infection control supplies required for a six to 12 week period, and a strategy for the disposal of contaminated materials.

² Comments in this section have been, for the most part, taken from the Toronto Pandemic Influenza Plan, February 7, 2006

7.0 Plan Implementation

The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined the following three periods and six phases of a pending influenza pandemic. The planned University initiatives during each of the six phases are outlined below. The University Director of Health Services will notify the PRM when each of the phases noted below is considered by the Region of Waterloo Public Health Authority to have started.

Period	Phase	Action
Inter Pandemic Period (Present)	<p><u>Phase I</u> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection is considered to be low.</p> <p><u>Phase II</u> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Influenza Pandemic Plan developed • Development of departmental / function COPs begins • Campus-wide health education initiatives begin
Pandemic Alert Period	<p><u>Phase III</u> Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human to human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact</p> <p><u>Phase IV</u> Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission, but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.</p> <p><u>Phase V</u> Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives from Inter Pandemic Period continue • Testing of the University's Influenza Pandemic Plan • Continuity of Operations Plans reviewed and communicated to staff • PRT assembled • If requested by the PRM, preparation for the implementation of measures outlined in Continuity of Operations Plans begins • University-wide educational programming and implementation of infection control measures
Pandemic Period	<p><u>Phase VI</u> Increased and sustained transmission in general population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When alerted by Region of Waterloo Public Health officials, the PRM will request the implementation of Continuity of Operations measures as required
Post-Pandemic Period	Return to inter-pandemic period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to normal operations

8.0 References and Resources

Government of Canada, Pandemic Influenza Web site: www.pandemicinfluenza.gc.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan:
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/>

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Emergency Management Unit website:
www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic

Waterloo Region Pandemic Influenza Web site: www.waterlooregionpandemic.ca

Cowan Wright Beauchamp Special Bulletin:
<http://www.cowanwrightbeauchamp.com/english/publications.html>

Windsor-Essex County pandemic Influenza Plan

World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

NACAS Pandemic Flu Preparedness Web Conference, June 28, 2006

Presentation by Mark Breen, Acting Manager, Emergency Management Unit, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, May 3, 2006

University of Waterloo, Preliminary Response to a Potential Influenza Pandemic, July 2006

University of Western Ontario, DRAFT Pandemic Influenza Emergency Plan

Wilfrid Laurier University, Business Continuity Planning, Contingency and Procedures Document, June 2006

Toronto Pandemic Influenza Plan, February 7, 2006