Dear Marshall Faculty and Staff

Shortly we will be sending out an email announcing our decision to cancel all Marshall global trips through May as a result of COVID-2019. I realize that this will be an enormous disappointment for our students and that many of you will also be upset after all the planning and work involved in these trips. In addition, the financial cost to Marshall, while only of secondary importance, will nevertheless run into the millions.

Given the central role these trips play in our Marshall students’ global experience we have worked overtime the last 6 weeks to avoid this outcome. Trips have been canceled and then rescheduled, students have been given options to travel or not, only to have all of these plans upended by yet another outbreak, CDC, WHO, or US State Department advisory, or other disruption. At this point we have already had to cancel all of our PM GLOBE trips for March and our PRIME trips in May. As uncertainty over the evolution of COVID-2019 has only grown over time the risks for any future travel have also grown. They are now at the point where we cannot in good conscience recommend that students participate in global travel this semester.

I would like to personally thank Vice Deans Suh-Pyng Ku and Ty Callahan, as well as Ana Barth and her team, Sriram Dasu, and all the other staff and faculty involved in the global programs. They have worked tirelessly, often late at night and into the weekends to accommodate the ever changing environment. We have an amazing team for which USC often relies on for advice on global issues.

This has been by far the hardest decision I have made as dean but it is unfortunately the correct one. Please provide any support you can for impacted students, faculty and staff as we work through this difficult situation.

Best

Gareth

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