To the University Community:

I write to thank you for the responsible and mature way you have handled the news that we had a community member with a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus. As all of us have absorbed reporting coming from overseas, we recognize the personal distress and social cost of an epidemic of this kind. Once it reaches our shores, the mettle of our community is tested, and the way in which we respond is a measure of our care for one another, our responsibilities to students, staff, and faculty, and our reliance on the many government agencies and experts that serve to protect us as the need arises.

I am fully confident that the medical authorities are on top of this situation. They have been advising us on nearly an hourly basis and continue to report that the risks to our campus are very, very low. I am also eternally grateful to the many members of our staff who have been on top of this situation from day one, including our medical professionals in University Health Services, our student affairs team, and dozens of others.

I would like to take a moment to dwell on the importance of remembering our mission and our values at a time like this. We serve a diverse city and region, and are proud to welcome students, faculty and staff, from all corners of the globe. We are unlike any other public university in New England. We extend ourselves and celebrate people of varied races, ethnicities, ages, and economic backgrounds and are proud of that record.

When any member of our diverse community is taken ill or experiences misfortune, we rally behind them. At all cost, we avoid the pitfalls that may arise elsewhere of stereotyping or discriminating against anyone regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, mental illness, veteran status, active military personnel, genetics, or experience in the criminal justice system. If you experience or witness an incident that does not support this goal, we ask that you report it to our Office of Civil Rights and Title IX using this link.

We know that some members of the community are feeling greater stress than usual, and I want to encourage you to seek out support and information from the many organizations on campus that are here for you. In particular, the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP) office has agreed to act as a gathering space for all students. The location of the AASSP office is McCormack Hall, 3rd floor, room 703, inside the Ryan Lounge; their office hours are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. More information regarding AASSP can be found here, and staff contact information can be found here.

Additionally, the University Health Services Counseling Center offers Emergency Walk-In appointments for any student in crisis. Their hours are Monday to Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Thursday/Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Their office is located on the 2nd floor of the Quinn Administration Building.

For faculty, administration and staff who may wish to get confidential support and resources, the
Employee Assistance Program that is operated by ComPsych GuidanceResources is available to you.

I close by remarking once again on how proud I am to be part of this remarkable university. It works hard to realize every aspiration a civic institution should strive for. And this week, in particular, it has hit the mark at every turn.

Cordially,

[Signature]

Interim Chancellor
Katherine Newman