I. Policy Statement

Towson University ("TU" or "University") encourages its students, faculty and staff to participate in international study, travel and activities abroad (hereafter referred to as "Participants") and promotes the development of opportunities for international study and other activities, including research. It also encourages all Participants to recognize the potential risks associated with international travel. This policy applies to all study abroad and/or international travel programs and activities. Participants should consult this policy for specific details before participating in study abroad or international travel programs or activities.

II. Definitions

a. "Study and/or travel abroad": An academic, educational or other program or activity offered outside the United States in which Participants earn academic credit at TU, or participate as TU affiliates in travel, programs or other activities; includes such things as faculty-led programs, classroom activities, sabbaticals, research, and practical learning experiences as well as athletic competitions, experiential learning, etc. Faculty and staff participating in a study and/or travel abroad may conduct activities such as teaching, research, intercultural learning, or supervision of students as well as facilitation of cultural immersion extracurricular activities.

b. "Study and/or travel abroad participant": Any faculty, staff or student who is participating in a study and/or travel abroad activity outside of the United States, including but not limited to enrollment at a foreign institution, enrollment in a study abroad provider program, exchange, faculty-led program, internship, service learning, sports event participation, experiential learning, sabbatical or research activity or any other activity for which Towson University has approved participation.

c. "Travel Advisory": Official communication regarding safety and security information provided by the U.S. Department of State ("State Department") to those who intend to travel internationally. The State Department issues Travel Advisories to countries, regions, and/or globally at the following levels: Level 1 (Exercise Normal Precautions), Level 2 (Exercise Increased Caution), Level 3 (Reconsider Travel), and Level 4 (Do Not Travel).

d. “Travel Health Notice”: Official communication regarding current health issues that impact travelers in specific international destinations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"). The CDC issues notices to countries and/or regions at the following levels: Watch Level 1 – Green (Practice Usual Precautions);
Alert Level 2 – Yellow (Practice Enhanced Precautions), and Warning Level 3 – Red (Avoid All Non-Essential Travel).

III. Responsible Executive and Office

Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President for Student Affairs
Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

IV. Individuals and/or Entities Affected by this Policy

This Policy applies to all Towson University students, faculty and staff and all TU departments, programs, and colleges.

V. Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all TU study and/or travel abroad programs, activities, and Participants, students and faculty and staff leaders. The University will not offer, administer, or support study and/or travel abroad in, nor approve travel through, countries (or areas within a country), regions, or globally given a Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) or Level 4 (Do Not Travel) State Department Travel Advisory and/or a CDC Warning Level 3 (Avoid Non-Essential Travel) Travel Health Notice. All Participants are required to complete an International Travel Waiver acknowledging the associated risks of traveling to and within the host country(ies) at the time of the application or at the time of request for sabbatical or leave for travel.

Should a Travel Advisory or Travel Health Notice level change for a country in which Towson University Participants are present, notification will be sent to the Participants making them aware of the State Department's or CDC’s recommendations to the extent the University has been made aware of the Participant's travel plans. If the Travel Advisory increases to a Level 3 or 4 and/or the Travel Health Notice increases to a Warning Level 3, assistance in facilitating the Participants' return home and/or other arrangements may be provided to the extent possible if deemed necessary by the International Travel Advisory Committee in consultation with the Office of Vice President and General Counsel, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Should a Travel Advisory increase to a Level 3 or 4 and/or a Travel Health Notice increases to a Warning Level 3 for a country in which TU administers its own study abroad program or activity or should the University deem it necessary for other reasons, appropriate actions may be taken, including, but not limited to, adjusting the program schedule, relocating the program, ending the program early, or suspending or canceling the program. Determination will be made by the International Travel Advisory Committee in consultation with the Office of Vice President and General Counsel, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.
VI. Appeal Process

A Participant may appeal and seek reconsideration of a decision not to allow travel to a country or region given a Level 3 (Reconsider Travel) Travel Advisory. Appeals for permission to travel to Level 3 Travel Advisory areas within a country by Participants will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to a risk assessment review conducted by the International Travel Advisory Committee. A final determination will be made by the Office of the Provost or the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs if the travel relates to a student affairs led program.

Submit appeals to the International Travel Advisory Committee as far in advance as possible. Appeals should include all information the individual traveler (e.g., student, faculty or staff participant) believes to be relevant. Relevant information may include, though is not necessarily limited to, any newly acquired information concerning the security situation at the travel destination; precautions planned to mitigate risks; key contacts at the travel destination; plans in the event of a potential crisis (e.g., terrorist incident, medical emergency, natural disaster, etc.), including relocation and/or evacuation; a communication plan in the event of a crisis; the academic and personal preparation of the individual including prior language study, regional studies, international experiences, and preparatory actions; and the academic necessity of such travel at this time.

The International Travel Advisory Committee in conjunction with the Office of the Provost will assess each appeal on a case-by-case basis. In reaching a determination, the Office of the Provost will consider those facts identified above, as well as any other information deemed relevant under the circumstances.

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Effective Date: 5/26/2020

Acknowledged By: President’s Council