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MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty
Directors/Department Chairs
Deans

From: Havidán Rodríguez, PhD 
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: November 20, 2015

Subject: International Travel

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) remains committed to increasing its presence, visibility, and impact at the national and international level. As part of the global community, we espouse to have members of our University community, especially faculty, actively participate in international conferences in which they can present their research, engage in performances or exhibitions, and develop and expand their professional networks at the international level. This is extremely important as we continue to promote the education of global citizens at our University.

Additionally, the University is committed to the safety and well-being of its students, faculty, and staff when they participate in these activities. Some areas of the world present heightened health and safety risks as outlined on the [U.S. Department of State Travel Alerts and Warnings' list](#). Travel to these countries may require additional efforts to mitigate risk and, at times, call for the avoidance of travel altogether.

Directors/Department Chairs and Deans play a key role in reviewing all requests for travel, especially international travel, which require a substantial investment of funds. Moreover, University employees have a collective responsibility to be good stewards of our institutional resources.

We ask all University employees (e.g., faculty and staff) considering international travel to carefully review and abide by the following stipulations:

1. International travel using University or external funds may be authorized for those activities that result in demonstrable benefit(s) to the institution in the areas of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and/or service.

2. Documentation of university-related business or a formal letter of acceptance from event (e.g., conference, symposium, exhibitions, etc.) officials to present a paper, conduct an exhibition or to perform at an international conference must accompany the request for travel. Documentation must include dates of the event.
3. Travel requests should be submitted through the appropriate channels starting at the school/department/unit level.
4. Requests for travel must be submitted at least six (6) weeks prior to the travel date.
5. All University employees traveling abroad must register with [International SOS](#). Faculty and staff should arrange their travel through Corporate Travel Planners, which includes registration with International SOS.
6. All UTRGV faculty and staff traveling internationally, with or without University funds, to conduct University business, such as participation in research, conferences or teaching endeavors, within one's capacity as a faculty or a staff member, must request approval from the International Oversight Committee (IOC) for travel to countries on the [U.S. Department of State Travel Alerts and Warnings](#) list.
7. The IOC is required to perform a thorough risk assessment to determine that adequate safeguards are in place for travel to countries on the [U.S. Department of State Travel Alerts and Warnings](#) list.
8. National and international travel to countries not included on the [U.S. Department of State Travel Alerts and Warnings](#) list do ***not*** require IOC approval.

Reasons that result in delayed approvals or denied travel requests may include:

- Requests submitted late or within a few days of departure.
- Incomplete documentation (i.e., letter of acceptance to a conference is not included).
- No justification provided for travel.
- No funding source identified.
- Incomplete or incorrect forms.
- Not registered with International SOS.
- Travel form does not specify arrangements for coverage of classes or other employment responsibilities.
- Delayed review by approvers at the various levels.

Once again, UTRGV aims to expand its geographical presence and to build and strengthen partnerships across the world. Faculty play an important role in this process, and we will strive to facilitate and expedite travel requests. However, it is also important we all work together to ensure we follow our institutional [travel policy](#), the instructions for travel to foreign countries provided in iShop, and the abovementioned stipulations to avoid unnecessary delays in the approval process.