Hello Italy students and their families,

As you may be aware, cases of COVID-19 were reported over the weekend in the Lombardy and Veneto regions in northern Italy, with most new cases near the Province of Lodi. These new cases have prompted local authorities in the Lombardy and Veneto regions to take measures to contain the virus, including canceling some public activities and events, and closing schools. Italian authorities have also placed some of the most affected towns in those regions under quarantine and limited travel in and out of those areas.

The safety and health of our students are the top priorities for Lewis University. As our Rome students prepare for any weekend or Spring Break travel, we are strongly discouraging them from leaving Rome. If they do decide to go against our recommendation, they must share their travel plans with Lewis University and International Studies Abroad (ISA). They should also monitor the news and their e-mails for any updates concerning the outbreak and any possible travel restrictions. We do not believe it is wise to leave the local area and possibly get infected or be in a quarantined state. Again, we are recommending to students that they not leave the Rome area.

We understand that this is an evolving situation. We are closely monitoring updates from official government sources and our partners both here and in-country to react appropriately as changes occur. Those include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the United States Department of State, international news outlets, American Association of College and University Programs in Italy (AACUPI), International Studies Abroad (ISA), and on-site staff. As the situation develops, we will continue to provide updates and recommendations for our students in Italy and around Europe.

Based on the recommendations of our partners and the Italian government, we highly discourage travel to the areas under quarantine, which is currently the Lodi and Codogno provinces in Italy. We also do not recommend any travel to the regions of northern Italy in the vicinity of the quarantine areas. This includes Venice, Milan, Padova, Pavia, and Torino (Turin). We are canceling any academic trips and excursions outside of the Rome area. This includes highly discouraging any students from leaving Rome for any travel. As a contingency plan not yet implemented, we are making preparations for flights back to the United States using our official partner-Corporate Traveler in case the outbreak continues to spread.

To keep informed about the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, we recommend the following resources:
- World Health Organization (WHO) Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak page
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Coronavirus Disease 2019 page
- US Embassy in Rome Health Alert-February 23, 2020

Thank you for your patience and collaboration during this situation. Again, our students' health and safety are our top priorities. We will keep you updated on any changes as the situation develops. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us.

Sincerely,
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