URGENT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ NOW!

September 29, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian of Travel Course Student:

This letter provides information on the following topics: student/faculty safety, Department of State travel warnings, May Term emergency information web site and travel insurance. We, the faculty and administration, think that students engaged in an excellent liberal arts education benefit from a global classroom experience by preparing them for “responsible citizenship and leadership in a democratic society and a global community”—a central objective of our May Term Program and the University’s mission. We also think that we have an obligation to proactively educate our students.

Student / Faculty Safety and Department of State Travel Warnings
IWU holds matters of student/faculty/staff safety to be of paramount priority. This primary concern was evidenced during the Gulf War, when students and faculty leaders participating in short term travel courses were returned home, as a precautionary measure. It is University policy that every international trip must have a host institution or multiple travel course leaders and/or adult assistants. After the events of September 11, 2001, the University further developed its travel policy stating, “...faculty and students will not be permitted to travel on official University business...to any country where a Travel Warning has been issued by the Department of State and said Warning is in effect on their date of intended departure.” The status of travel warnings around the world is available at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

May Term Emergency Information
Should an emergency occur, we will inform students and parents of itinerary changes, as soon as details become available. We also will post information on the May Term Emergency Information website:
https://www.iwu.edu/melloncenter/mayterm/student-resources.html
In the event of an individual student/faculty emergency, the course leader or assistant will immediately contact the University. We will notify family members of the situation as soon as possible. With this in mind, Illinois Wesleyan’s Mellon Center strongly suggests that each student traveling makes sure that at least one parent or legal guardian has a valid passport at the time of the travel course departure.

Travel Insurance
Last minute cancellations can be costly. We cannot control unexpected events: a call to jury duty, a sudden illness or death in the family, a strike, the bankruptcy of an airline, etc. However, there are protective steps that can be taken. IWU does not mandate additional travel insurance; rather our goal is to provide information to you so that you may make an informed decision. The choice is yours to make. Many homeowners’ policies provide coverage while traveling abroad. Illinois Wesleyan strongly suggests to May Term travel participants (as it has for many years) that they carefully research and discuss the option of acquiring travel insurance.

How to Locate Travel Insurance that Fits Your Needs
The travel agencies with whom IWU regularly works offer information from the following agencies: Travel Guard International, Travelex, and CSA Travel Protection. Information is available at their web sites: www.travelGuard.com; www.travelexinsurance.com; and www.travelinsure.com. You may wish to investigate other companies on your own. The Mellon Center cannot respond to questions concerning specific insurance coverage. Please call the insurance providers with all questions regarding travel insurance.

If you should decide to purchase travel insurance, please: a) carefully compare the coverage offered by each company, b) adhere to the payment schedule—Companies may require immediate payment dates in order to receive complete (pre-existing conditions) coverage; and c) provide the Mellon Center with the travel insurance contact information.

We hope you have found this information of value.

Lynda M. Duke
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