

Message from the President

COVID-19 is a once-in-a-century pandemic facing humanity today. With no experience to draw on when it comes to dealing with the disease, it is an extremely difficult task to predict how and to what extent the pandemic situation will unfold. I also find it extraordinary that, as the word pandemic implies "all people", we are all sharing the experience of an unprecedented calamity with people across the globe in real time.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Hokkaido University created a taskforce to gather information and intelligence to respond with its best efforts to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. However, the turmoil we have been through so far has taught us that this as-yet-unexplored infectious disease is hard to beat. At the present time, we are trying to flexibly accommodate both needs of sustainable education and research and preventing and curbing the spread of the virus.

Due to a new spike in COVID-19 cases in Hokkaido, the Hokkaido Government raised its COVID-19 alert from Stage 1 to 2 on October 28, and designated the two weeks from the date as an intensive prevention period. Their Alert Stage was once again raised from 2 to 3 on November 7 with the said period being extended to November 27. This was followed by the decision that the City of Sapporo would enter a more critical Stage 4 on November 17.

Meanwhile, the University took every opportunity to remind all University staff and students to adhere to the public health measures such as indoor ventilation, mask wearing and avoiding dining with those outside their own household, and proceeded with day-to-day activities under the restrictions provided in the Response Plan of our Hokkaido University Business Continuity Plan During Coronavirus Outbreak (BCP). But despite the efforts, new cases still keep emerging in our University community.

It is vital for all members of the community to work together in order to curve the spread of COVID-19. I would like to ask you for your understanding and cooperation to pull through this pandemic crisis.

Thank you for your continued efforts to support and safeguard our University community.

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Hokkaido University