

Eastern professor tests positive

University: Faculty member does not live locally; students have been contacted

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WINDHAM/WILLIMANTIC — The area has its first case of the international virus that has municipalities, schools and businesses scrambling and Windham officially declaring an emergency in town.

Officials said Sunday a faculty member at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic has contracted the coronavirus.

ECSU Director of Community Edward Osborn confirmed Sunday afternoon a faculty member tested positive for COVID-19.

“We are committed to protecting the health and safety of our campus community and are dealing with a health care emergency of international scope that is changing daily,” Osborn wrote in an email this morning. “We will notify the campus community about any changes to our current plans as necessary.”

Osborn said because of HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the law prohibits the release of the person’s name.

He confirmed this morning the faculty member is a female professor.

Osborn said the students in the professor’s classes have already been notified about the confirmed case via email.



Eastern Connecticut State University said a faculty member has tested positive for the coronavirus. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

All students, faculty and staff were also emailed Sunday.

The university announced last week it will close after spring break from March 23 through April 5.

Classes will be delivered in mixed online-only formats.

“This is an international situation

and as far as predicting what’s going to happen based on any circumstances is premature,” Osborn said. “We are closed until at least April 5.”

The closure was not related to the professor, Osborn said.

Osborn did not have much additional information before press time,

including where and when the professor contracted the illness or where the professor lives.

Eastern President Elsa Núñez said this morning the professor does not live locally and commuted some distance to the university.

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- The first local coronavirus impact was announced Sunday by Eastern Connecticut State University as a faculty member has tested positive for the virus.

- Three cases of the coronavirus have been identified in the Hartford area so far, according to WFSB, as the number of cases across Connecticut rose to at least 26 as of Sunday, state officials said.

- China, where the COVID-19 virus was first detected in December, now accounts for less than half of the world’s 169,000 cases, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University, the Associated Press reported.

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She was unaware of her specific hometown, however.

Núñez said the professor's work area is closed and a deep cleaning will occur today and Tuesday.

Osborn said more discussion would occur today, as the announcement was made while the university was closed on a Sunday.

Núñez said she is working on keeping people calm during a crisis.

"I think people feel we were well organized," Núñez said. "People are asking questions, but they're not panicking."

Gov. Ned Lamont said Sunday evening there are currently 26 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Connecticut.

Lamont said there were 16 cases in Fairfield County, three cases in Hartford County, four cases in Litchfield County and three cases in New Haven County.

Windham Town Manager Jim Rivers said previously, if there is a confirmed case in the local area, town operations might be limited.

As a result, Rivers said this morning nonessential services like the Willimantic



The electronic sign at Eastern Connecticut State University's Sports Center reads that the facility will be closed until at least April 6. Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff

Public Library, Windham Senior Center and the Windham Recreation department are now closed.

He said Windham officials are currently working to limit town hall functions and public meetings and Windham

has declared a town emergency regarding the virus.

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