As mentioned in my message of November 29, Global Safety & Security (GS&S) has spent the past weeks evaluating the evolving state of domestic and international travel, as governments worldwide assess and respond to their current circumstances and the risks posed by the Omicron variant. While much is still unknown, we now have greater confidence that the imposition by governments of additional outright bans on travel will be an exception and not a rule. Although international travel will likely remain challenging and logistically onerous through at least the first half of 2022, it will not be entirely impossible – at least from the United States to some destinations.

We are therefore lifting our suspension of international travel by graduate students, as planned.

For travel that commences on or after today, the permissible travel guidelines previously announced as effective from December 6, 2021 once again fully apply. We are adding a requirement for those engaging in University-sanctioned international travel to self-attest that they are able to comply with whatever testing requirements are necessary for them to return home.

Permissible Travel for Spring Semester

Our intention is to maintain, for at least the first half of the Spring term, the posture for permissible University-sanctioned travel we have adopted for winter break and Wintersession. We are working on an improved format for the permissible travel guidelines that will make their requirements easier to navigate. We will re-release the guidelines in this new format in early January.

In brief, the following University-sanctioned travel will continue to be permissible, with certain conditions:

1. Undergraduate individual and group domestic travel, unless otherwise precluded by restrictions on undergraduates leaving campus.
2. Graduate student individual and group domestic travel.
3. Graduate student individual and group international travel to destinations subject to a Level 1, 2, or 3 travel advisory from the State Department.
4. Faculty/academic professional/staff domestic and international travel.
As is the case for Wintersession, GS&S-issued guidelines will not contain any explicit restrictions on personal travel, domestic or international, by undergraduates during the Spring semester. However, other University offices may impose restrictions on undergraduates leaving campus as part of campus-wide public health measures. Any such rules will be announced to the undergraduate community by those offices in the weeks ahead. In all cases and for everyone in our community, we continue to strongly urge anyone considering personal international travel to weigh carefully the risks involved.

Finally, we are working to develop an exemption process that will allow graduate students facing exigent circumstances to engage in short-term University-sanctioned travel to some international destinations under a Level 4 travel advisory. We will have more to say on the requirements and process for requesting such exemptions in separate communications to graduate students in January.

We are grateful to all of you for your continued understanding of the travel-related measures we must take to ensure the health and well-being of our travelers, our campus, and the communities into which we journey. I know the ongoing need for these reasonable constraints is frustrating and unwelcome. The entire GS&S team looks forward to a time when the pandemic no longer weighs so heavily on our travel policies; unfortunately, that time has not yet arrived.

The GS&S team is happy to answer your questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us via email at globalsafety@princeton.edu.

From all of us in GS&S to all of you and your families, our warmest wishes for a healthy, safe, and relaxing winter holiday season.