Dear Members of the Colgate Community,

I am writing to share details about how Colgate evaluates and makes decisions during situations, considers the health and safety of the community, and responds on a case-by-case basis.

Behind these careful procedures, there is a commitment to all members of our community, their safety, and their ability to participate in the University’s academic mission. We study together, work together, and we even endure sub-zero temperatures together.

Winter weather in central New York can be difficult at times, and particularly low temperatures, high winds, and ice this season have exacerbated this fact. Three dedicated staff members in the University’s Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) report directly to me, and they track weather patterns and notifications from the National Weather Service.

In the event of a pending significant weather-related event, EHS convenes the University’s Weather Decision Group, which consists of representatives from the faculty, human resources, buildings and grounds, communications, and senior administration.

The Weather Decision Group first considers the personal health and safety of the campus community, and then reviews the status of roads, parking, pathways, and building accessibility. In addition, we ensure that all utilities are operational, and consider how a delay or closure might impact services and planned events on campus, including the impact of class disruptions for course continuity and scheduling.

Our decisions are shared via a Colgate Alert system, which distributes text and voicemail messages directly to individual cell phones. In addition, students, faculty, and staff receive e-mails about closures or delays. Information is also shared with local media and posted to the University’s website and official social media channels.

We deliberate with care and concern, and I personally take the time to walk around campus to evaluate conditions immediately before any decisions are made. We also listen to input from our buildings and grounds crews as they work to keep our miles of roads and pathways safe.

The safety of our students, faculty, and staff is always our main concern. Community members are always encouraged to report any concerns directly to Campus Safety at cusafety@colgate.edu, or by phone at 315-228-7911.

Respectfully,

Dan Gough
Associate Vice President for Campus Safety, Emergency Management and Environmental Health and Safety