

Subject: Update for OCS Students about Spring 2021

Dear Spring 2021 OCS students,

In recent weeks the rapid spread of COVID19 in the US and in some other regions of the world have led us to be less optimistic about the possibility that Whitman students will be able to attend spring 2021 OCS programs. While we are not yet formally withdrawing your OCS approval for spring 2021, **we continue to urge you not to purchase airline tickets or incur any other expenses (such as enrollment deposits*) that you are not willing to lose.**

Whitman plans to make a decision no later than early November about whether the college will affirm or cancel your spring 2021 OCS approval. The decision will rest primarily on the following factors:

- government guidance on health and safety related to travel and conditions in host countries from the US Dept of State, Centers for Disease Control and other sources
- the status of the OCS program itself and the mode of teaching offered
- the quality of the OCS experience overall in the face of COVID19 precautions in that destination
- barriers due to travel restrictions, ability to obtain a passport or visa, and/or mandatory quarantines upon arrival
- the quality of medical resources and medical infrastructure in the host country

* If your OCS program is still operating in Spring 2021 but Whitman cancels your approval for safety or other reasons, Whitman will reimburse you for the enrollment deposit that you have paid unless the program itself offers a refund.

You may wish to consider the possibility of studying abroad in your senior year, which is possible in some majors. Please discuss how you might complete your senior capstone requirements and study away in the fall or spring of your senior year with your major adviser, if this is of interest to you.

We are very sorry that the forecast for spring 2021 OCS is not rosier. To be on the safe side, we suggest that you plan to register for Spring 2021 courses at Whitman, in the event that spring OCS is not possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Barbara Hoffman if you have any questions about your individual situation.

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