

July 14, 2020

Subj: Reopening the University – Message 8

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues:

In just a few short weeks, students will begin returning to our campus in preparation for the August 10 start of the fall semester. Please know how much we appreciate your continuing efforts to make this possible. We are especially grateful to colleagues in departments across the University who are busily modifying classrooms for physical distancing, installing new hybrid teaching technologies, and otherwise preparing for a successful semester.

In the past week, we have had the chance to see firsthand the work underway to make classrooms safer and more effective for hybrid teaching and learning, to assess plans and campus facilities for coronavirus testing, to discuss ongoing faculty concerns with department chairs, and to work with the Behavior Change Working Group. We will continue to update you as we finalize these plans. In the meantime, here is the latest.

International Students

For the past few weeks, Notre Dame International in collaboration with Directors of Graduate Studies and academic advising has been working closely with international graduate students and returning international undergraduate students, who are facing unprecedented challenges, about maintaining progress toward their degrees during these most unusual times.

At the same time, we have been dealing with the many deeply disappointed international first-year students who very much want to join our campus community this fall, but are unable to do so due to travel restrictions and/or the significant backlog of U.S. visa requests. Like returning international undergraduate students, first-year international undergraduate students who are unable to make it to South Bend due to visa issues or travel restrictions will be offered the opportunity to “study away locally” by which we mean taking courses at one of our study abroad programs or partner universities in their home country. These students will be allowed to join us on campus in January for the spring semester if virus-related and immigration issues allow. For more information regarding Notre Dame’s response to the situation facing international students, please see the [Notre Dame International website](#).

Campus Gatherings Policy

Earlier today, Fr. Jenkins approved a [Fall 2020 Gatherings Policy](#) intended to reduce the risk of the potential spread of the coronavirus. As much as possible, we should all plan to hold meetings virtually or in a hybrid model throughout the fall semester. Some in-person meetings may be appropriate for morale and productivity purposes, provided they comply with established protocols, including wearing face coverings and maintaining physical distancing.

Dual-mode Classroom Technology Update

For a preview of the new dual-mode classroom technology, please visit the [Dual-mode Classroom Technology](#) webpage, which includes a 3-minute video overview. The page also provides information on how to sign up for hands-on classroom technology workshops that start the week of July 20. We will update information about Registrar- and department-controlled classrooms as additional details become available.

Standard Language for Syllabi

In response to requests from faculty members, we are developing standard language that can be included on syllabi regarding expectations for student compliance with health and safety protocols. We are working with Student Affairs to harmonize standard language and expect to share it later this week.

Student Move-in Protocols

We have received multiple questions regarding the student move-in process. Student Affairs is developing detailed move-in protocols to address these concerns and will publish those plans in the near future. We note that these plans will be an update of the already carefully developed plans that were used for student move-out earlier this summer. During that process, we observed full compliance with health and safety protocols, and are not aware of any cases of COVID-19 that resulted from the move-out process.

Identify, Trace, Contain

Despite the many precautions we are taking to lessen the likelihood of infections among our campus community, we realize that some students, faculty, or staff members will contract the coronavirus during the fall semester. Thus, our strategy for dealing with the virus aims not only to prevent or limit its spread on our campus, but also to quickly identify potential infections through daily health checks and contact tracing – and then rapidly respond to those who are symptomatic, exposed, or infected with isolation and quarantine protocols.

Faculty, staff members and students who reside off campus who experience symptoms or have been exposed to the virus should quarantine or isolate at home. For students living on campus, Notre Dame has reserved on-campus and near campus facilities to house students who require a place to isolate or quarantine. The University will monitor and support students in all categories while in isolation or quarantine. Though we generally treat those in isolation and quarantine similarly, isolation is for active cases of COVID-19, and quarantine is for those who have been a close contact to a positive case.

Return to Campus Orientation Program

Though many people have expressed concerns about student compliance with health and safety protocols, it is equally incumbent upon each of us as faculty and staff members to role model the health and safety behaviors we expect of students. Starting now, and continuing throughout the fall semester, we must each follow these protocols and work to create a culture of compliance before students arrive. To support this effort, a team with representatives from Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Human Resources has created an online program highlighting the protocols we can all expect from one another. The Return to Campus Orientation program will be rolled out next week to all faculty, staff, and students emphasizing our shared responsibility and requiring each of us to make a commitment to ourselves and one another.

Separated at Birth?

Moving to Indiana is going to finally allow me (Marie Lynn) to fulfill my long-held aspiration to become a beekeeper. In doing some reading on honeybees recently, I realized the uncanny resemblance.



Thank you again for your efforts to help reopen the University, and remember:

- Wear a mask.
- Practice physical distancing.
- Wash your hands often.
- [And soon] Complete your daily health check.

This is hard work – really hard work, but we will do good things together.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President