

September 1, 2020

Subj: Reopening the University – Message 17

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues,

Tomorrow our undergraduate lower level classes will resume in-person instruction, with others scheduled to do so in the next few days. We are optimistic that the difficulties we faced in the past several weeks have not only strengthened our resolve as a community to move forward together in this challenging semester, but also strengthened our ability to respond to the coronavirus itself.

Here is the latest:

The Numbers

In the past two weeks, we have managed to flatten the curve at Notre Dame by working together. We are hopeful we will continue to see a decline in the number of cases. Students are being released from quarantine and isolation (Q/I) at significantly higher rates than those going into Q/I. Though we would be thrilled to have no cases on our campus, the reality is that we will likely continue to see positive cases throughout the semester. The additional flexibility and capability we recently added to our systems will bolster our strategy to identify positive cases quickly through diagnostic and surveillance testing – and then separate them from others and properly care for them.

Dashboard Enhancements

Yesterday we added a new function to the [Covid-19 Dashboard](#) that separates active cases from those who have recovered and returned to campus or work. Thank you for your feedback regarding the dashboard, and please know we will continue to make enhancements to the dashboard in the weeks ahead.

Off-Campus Test Results

To make it easier for those who may be tested off campus to have their test results included in the Covid-19 dashboard, people can now take a photo of their test results and send them to us in one of the following ways:

- Faculty and Staff Members: Send a photo of your test result to the Notre Dame Wellness Center at ndocchealth@premisehealth.com;
- Students (both undergraduate and graduate): Upload a photo of your test results through your student portal in UHS.

Daily Health Checks

We continue to stress the importance of completing daily health checks, even on weekends and days when people do not plan to come to campus. The reason for this is that we use data collected from the health checks – the symptom (s) reported on red passes and yellow passes – as a general assessment of campus community health regarding Covid-19, and as a leading indicator for future testing and resource planning.

Surveillance Testing Update

Since it was launched on August 21, we have conducted 2,300+ surveillance tests, with a positivity rate of 0.9%. Later this week, we will be pilot testing a saliva-based testing program. We are grateful to Professor Mike Pfrender for his leadership in developing the saliva-based testing laboratory. Special thanks as well to Liz Rulli, Brandon Rich, Carol Mullaney, and Carolina Avendano for their role in coordinating the implementation of surveillance testing, and to Professor Fang Liu for her ongoing analysis of the data.

Special Thanks to Residential Life

Living in community is a distinctive part of a Notre Dame undergraduate education. In normal years, rectors, assistant rectors, resident assistants, priests and faculty in residence, and the housing operations team each play crucial roles in fostering hall communities that are inclusive of all members; dedicated to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of each individual; and characterized by a collective sense of care and concern for the common good and service to others. This year, more than any other, our hall staff is supporting students pastorally and partnering across campus to ensure the health and safety of their residents. We are so grateful for their ministry and dedication to sharing life with our students.

Safe Fun

Several teams are working in partnership with Student Affairs and its Student Activities Office to create ways to overcome the limitations on student activities due to our gatherings and physical distancing policies. You will start to see some of their ideas coming to life around campus in coming days. There is a direct mechanism for students to put forward ideas. You might consider creating small opportunities or events for students around academic interests to help develop a sense of belonging and community. This might be particularly helpful for first-year students.

Concluding Thoughts

While students and faculty will be in class next Monday, we encourage staff members whose duties allow them to do so to take a well-earned break for Labor Day. All of us – faculty and staff members alike – have been working hard for months, and this break provides an opportunity to refresh and recharge after many months of hard work.

As we go forward, it is critically important that we look after one another and our students. We have all been under a great deal of pressure and stress the past few months, and it will take our continued efforts and teamwork to succeed during this unusual fall semester. Thank you for all you are doing to make this possible.

Please remember:

- Wear your mask
- Practice physical distancing
- Wash your hands regularly
- Complete your daily health check
- Show up when selected for surveillance testing

And be kind to each other and generous with yourself.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice-President