

September 30, 2021

Subj: Fall Update #3

Dear Colleagues,

We have enjoyed the many opportunities we've had to see more people in person these past few months and trust that you have as well. It's great to have our faculty and staff back together again in community, resuming the camaraderie and collaboration that are Notre Dame at its best.

While the pandemic is still affecting daily life both here at Notre Dame and around the world, campus conditions thus far this academic year have been stable, and we are cautiously optimistic about our ability to have a safe and successful academic year with as few interruptions as possible. We are grateful for the strong participation in the University's COVID-19 vaccine program and your partnership in adhering to the [health-and-safety policies](#), which are designed to protect the campus community.

We share below a few updates and reminders regarding our COVID-19 response.

#### **COVID dashboard**

When we last wrote in late August, the [COVID dashboard](#) had just been activated for the fall semester. Since that time, the University has administered more than 6,200 asymptomatic and symptomatic tests for students, faculty, and staff.

Weekly reporting shows that campus has experienced low positivity rates during the last five weeks, which we attribute to the high vaccination rate of our campus community and adherence to our protocols. Last week's positivity rate of 0.8 percent is the lowest of the semester, with 11 positive cases recorded out of 1,321 tests. In addition, Notre Dame's numbers are well below those in our surrounding community of St. Joseph County and the state of Indiana.

There have been increased instances of students with mononucleosis, strep throat, and colds this year. This likely results from immunologically naïve status due to the many precautions taken over the past 18 months. Please encourage students to seek help from UHS if they are not feeling well.

#### **Visitors policy**

Thanks to the loosening of the [Visitors Policy](#) earlier this year, we get to enjoy campus visits from loved ones, as well as the many friends and alumni who come to campus for home football games and other events. As a reminder, guests who are not Notre Dame students, faculty, and staff are not permitted in the University's residence halls.

### **Flu vaccines for faculty and staff**

Human Resources recently provided information about how you can [schedule a flu vaccine](#) through an in-network provider or during the upcoming on-campus Flu Vaccine Blitz. Flu vaccines are free at the listed locations to all benefit-eligible faculty and staff members, and dependents who are currently enrolled in the Notre Dame medical plan.

While many of the precautions being taken due to COVID-19 (frequent washing of hands, wearing a mask, physical distancing, etc.) provide some protection from respiratory illnesses like the flu, the CDC still recommends an annual flu vaccine for those six months and older. Getting the vaccine is one additional step we can all take to keep ourselves healthy as well as our family, friends, and campus community. We'll be signing up and hope that you will, too!

### **Closing thoughts**

In the coming weeks, fall colors will take over our natural landscape; however, campus will surely be just as beautiful as ever. It's our hope that we all can take the time to enjoy the warmer temperatures and summer-like views while they last. Thanks to Donna Fecher, academic program administrator in the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering, for this lovely collage of campus flowers.



Please be kind to each other and generous with yourselves.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Charles and Jill Fischer Provost  
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President