

August 11, 2020

Subj: Reopening the University – Message 12

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues,

Day 2 of classes! It's hard to believe that the semester is upon us. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for your incredible efforts to prepare for the start of the semester. We hope you recognize that our students think of all of you as heroes for making it possible for us to come together as a community. We also think of you as heroes and offer our deepest thanks for the thousands of things you all had to do to get to this point. Thank you.

What follows is a brief update on some of the latest information.

Pre-matriculation Testing

Yesterday, we received the latest results of student pre-matriculation testing. Of the 11,836 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students tested, 33 tests came back positive, for a positivity rate of 0.28%. Students who tested positive are not allowed on campus until cleared by University Health Services (UHS).

CRU Fully Operational

The daily health check is now providing guidance to individuals regarding symptoms indicative of COVID-19. When any member of the Notre Dame community indicates they are experiencing one or more of the “big three” symptoms (fever above 100.4, shortness of breath, loss of sense of taste or smell), they are directed to contact UHS (students) or the Wellness Center/healthcare provider (faculty/staff) for a clinical assessment to determine whether a test at the stadium testing center is needed. Students who test positive will be placed in isolation, and contact tracing will be initiated. Close contacts will be placed in quarantine. To date, the contact tracing team has been able to connect with close contacts quickly.

Surveillance Testing

Since we know some carriers of COVID-19 may not exhibit coronavirus symptoms, surveillance testing is part of our overall testing strategy. The pre-matriculation testing of all students, as well as testing of individuals associated with our football and volleyball programs this summer, represent the first wave of surveillance testing. Moving forward, we plan to randomly test some students and a smaller population of faculty/staff over the course of the next 3-4 weeks. In addition, if symptomatic testing, or the results of the random testing, suggest any meaningful concentration of cases in a given class, building, or residence hall, we will test broadly in those environments. Depending on the outcome of these rounds of testing, and the status of case rates in St. Joseph County and other key indicators, we may test all students once again as well as a concentration of faculty/staff regularly coming to campus.

COVID-19 Dashboard

The Notre Dame COVID-19 dashboard went live today and can be found [HERE](#). The dashboard is updated every day at 12:00 noon and provides information on the number of campus community members tested for COVID-19 at the stadium testing center and the number who test positive. Please note this dashboard intentionally does not include any pre-matriculation surveillance testing results.

Feedback and Incident Reporting

We appreciate those of you who over many months provided input regarding our plans. Though many of the questions and issues you raised were tough ones, they helped us better prepare. Both of us and members of our teams spent time in classroom buildings and were so impressed with both faculty and students. In addition, our ambassadors and OIT staff worked very hard to ensure a good start to the semester. For us to go forward together successfully, we need your continued input and observations to help us improve processes and better support you. You can provide feedback directly either by emailing provost@nd.edu or through the [HERE website](#).

In addition, there is now an [online form for reporting COVID-related incidents](#) with the potential to affect the Notre Dame community. This form is another means for all of us—faculty, staff, and students—to make sure we are following the various policies in place to limit the spread of the coronavirus. It is also a useful tool for identifying policies that would benefit from further clarification. For instance, there have been some incident reports submitted that suggest there may be confusion about the University’s mask policy when it comes to outdoor spaces. We are finalizing some language to help clarify when masks are expected to be worn outside. This will be shared with our broader community in the Thursday HERE e-mail that goes out to all faculty, staff, and students.

While it may be awkward on occasion, this is a time to hold each other accountable, leading with the kindness and grace that characterize Our Lady’s University. At some point, each of us is likely to walk out of our office without wearing a mask. Each of us is likely to witness violations of health and safety protocols on campus. And each of us has a duty to politely address these issues and support one another. Students are looking to each of us to set an example of resilience and leadership—and we know you will provide it.

We all need to use every bit of kindness, flexibility, and patience we possess – and then some. We passed by this sign and placed our hands on it, as our football players do, and said a prayer for the entire Notre Dame community. Then we used some hand sanitizer and moved on. 😊



Please:

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

And please be kind to each other and to yourselves.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President