



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

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Subj: Reopening the University – Message 20

Dear Colleagues,

As we near the midpoint in this unusual semester, we hope you are doing well and taking advantage of the beautiful fall weather. Even as the sunshine this week gives us a first good look at the leaves turning colors, the cooler evenings and shortened daylight hours signal that cold weather is on the horizon. Here are some updates.

By the Numbers

Our overall numbers continue to be encouraging, and we remain cautiously optimistic that our evolving diagnostic and surveillance testing programs are helping to quickly identify and isolate the cases that arise within our campus community. That was exactly the case when the Athletics Department's testing program uncovered a number of new positive Covid-19 cases yesterday, prompting the football team to suspend practice and postpone this weekend's away game against Wake Forest University. As always, we will learn from this experience and become stronger as a result.

Flu Shots

This year, we strongly encourage everyone, including spouses and dependents, to get their flu shots. Yesterday the Office of Human Resources [announced the first of two on-campus opportunities](#) for Notre Dame community members to receive flu vaccinations. Appointments available for faculty and staff members quickly filled up, and another on-campus opportunity will be announced in the coming weeks. These vaccinations are free to all faculty and staff members, and dependents who are currently enrolled in the Notre Dame medical plan. Though not highlighted in the HR announcement, [research](#) has shown lower incidence of seasonal flu in both the southern and northern hemispheres, which may be related to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Mental Health Resources

Among the things our health and safety protocols cannot prevent, however, are the feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression some may be experiencing as we weather the COVID-19 pandemic. No one is immune to these issues; we encourage you to look after yourselves and others for signs of stress or distress. Remember: If you see something, say something. Sometimes a simple "Are you okay?" or "How are you doing?" at the right moment may be all that is needed to help someone know others care. At other times, referring a person to the University Counseling Center may be appropriate. The [HERE](#) campaign website contains a [number of resources](#) to assist you or others in dealing with the many internal and external stresses we all encounter from time to time.

Other Issues on the Horizon

We know you are eagerly awaiting decisions on issues such as: 1) the spring academic calendar; 2) travel and visitors' policies between the semesters; and 3) the possibility of study abroad programs for the spring semester. Please know that we are working diligently to get you these answers. We anticipate releasing information on the first this week, the second next week, and the third by mid-October.

Closing Thoughts

It was a little over a month ago that Father John announced the temporary transition to online instruction. That we have bounced back in the manner we have is a testament to the hard work and commitment of you and our students, and a source of inspiration for us and others in University leadership. We should all be encouraged by how far we have come even as we acknowledge that we must continue to be diligent in observing our health and safety protocols.

So, please remember:

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

Please be generous with yourselves and with each other.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President