

November 17, 2020

Subj: Reopening the University – Message 28

Dear Colleagues:

With just a few days remaining in the semester, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the challenges we faced together to get to this point. They began in spring and summer as we confronted the uncertainties of a global pandemic, and they continued throughout the fall, forcing us on several occasions to reset plans and expectations. What never changed was our commitment to keeping our students on track and meaningfully engaged with faculty members and fellow students.

Whether working or teaching on campus, from home, or elsewhere, you helped our University deliver on the promise of a Notre Dame education for our students under unprecedented circumstances. Thank you.

Here is a brief update as we complete final examinations and prepare for the Thanksgiving break and Winter Session.

***Campus Shuttle Service Suspended, but Parking Lots Open***

The Campus Shuttle service was temporarily suspended at end of day Friday, Nov. 13, and will restart at the beginning of day Monday, Feb. 1. Campus parking lots will be open and available for faculty, staff, and remaining students to park closer to their buildings. Please contact the Parking Services Office at 631-5053 or [parking@nd.edu](mailto:parking@nd.edu) for assistance in locating available parking.

***No Changes to Fall Grading***

As you may know, a number of students and groups continue to inquire about a potential shift to pass/no-credit grading for the fall semester, as was done during the spring semester. Should your students inquire about it, you should know that we considered this issue and have no plans to shift to pass/no-credit grading this fall.

***Student Exit Testing***

Last week, in preparation for end-of-semester departures, we ramped up our mandatory exit testing for students with [extended hours](#) through Saturday, November 21. Graduate and professional students who plan to remain on campus beyond this week can schedule a test through Tuesday, November 24. Those graduate students staying longer should contact University Health Services to schedule a test through December 19.

***Daily Health Checks and Surveillance Testing during the Break***

Please continue to complete your daily health check if you reside on-campus or are coming to campus on any day. We will resume daily health checks for all members of the Notre Dame community

sometime in January. More details will follow as plans for the spring semester firm up. We will continue to send the daily health check e-mail to all faculty and staff during the winter session because it is challenging to identify who is coming to campus. Surveillance testing will continue after the Thanksgiving Break, mostly for those who will reside or work on campus during the Winter Session.

### ***Precautions for Holiday Travel***

We urge those of you who may be traveling during the holidays to use caution, to continue to follow health and safety protocols, and to consult the [Winter Session Travel Policy](#) if you have questions. HR has identified [locations](#) in the South Bend-Elkhart region that perform COVID-19 tests. The University Wellness Center is also available to provide advice on health and safety matters.

### ***COVID Dashboard Clarification***

A number of sharp-eyed people noted what appeared to be a discrepancy between the COVID dashboard and the percentage of positive cases identified through surveillance testing cited in our Message 27. To clarify: when someone is flagged via saliva testing as positive, we treat that person as positive in terms of isolation and quarantine of close contacts immediately. However, because our saliva lab is not yet CLIA-certified, we have to collect a follow up nasal swab sample that is sent to LabCorp for analysis. Once we do that, the test is technically classified as a diagnostic rather than surveillance test because we have indications that the person is positive, rather than randomly screening them. For purposes of understanding the effectiveness of our surveillance testing, as well as numbers of asymptomatic individuals testing positive, we still count them as surveillance tests in our decision-making.

### ***Closing Thoughts***

Our saliva surveillance team benefited tremendously from a dedicated group of students who helped ensure a good experience for all who were called for testing. In thanks, Joanna McNulty, on loan from Notre Dame Research, made these masked gingerbread man cookies for our student volunteers. So much creativity here at Notre Dame!

As one of the most challenging semesters in Notre Dame history draws to a close, we again thank you for your many months of patience, dedication, and hard work. We wish all of you a blessed Thanksgiving and hope you will find time for rest and relaxation next week as well.

Please remember that the best ways for you and your families to remain safe this holiday season are to:

- Wear your mask
- Practice physical distancing
- Wash your hands regularly
- Complete your daily health check if you are coming to campus
- Show up when selected for surveillance testing

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost  
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President

