

March 2, 2021

Subj: Spring Update #7

Dear Colleagues:

Wednesday evening our campus community – faculty, staff, and students – will pause for a memorial service hosted by Campus Ministry to commemorate the loss of more than 2.5 million people worldwide due to COVID-19. The service will begin at 5:45 p.m. with the tolling of the bells at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Then at 6 p.m., Fr. Pete McCormick will hold a brief prayer service near the Fr. Sorin statue on the South Quad that will be followed by a candlelit procession to the Grotto. We invite you to take part in this solemn ceremony. What follows is a brief update.

Vaccination program update

We have three key developments to report regarding COVID-19 vaccines:

- Earlier today, the State of Indiana extended eligibility to receive the vaccine to Indiana residents ages 55 and older.
- The state also announced that Notre Dame will be among three locations statewide to host large-scale vaccination events later this month for those who are then eligible under the state guidelines. The Indiana Department of Health will administer the vaccines at Compton Family Ice Arena from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 26 and 27, with the possibility of extending an additional day. Note that the vaccines will be administered to those eligible under the state guidelines, whether or not they study or work at the University.
- This week, we are piloting a tool with select groups on campus that will allow people to electronically report if they have been vaccinated against COVID-19. We hope to roll this tool out to the entire campus community in the coming weeks.

Vaccines are critical in slowing and stopping the spread of COVID-19. Consistent with CDC guidance, we encourage all who are eligible to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Dashboard numbers

The mix and total number of people who come in for surveillance (asymptomatic) testing varies each day. For example, on Mondays, 70%/30% of the scheduled surveillance tests are on-campus/off-campus students, and on Wednesdays, the ratio is 63%/37%. Thus, to get a sense of how our numbers are trending, it is helpful to compare like days of the week. Over the past three Mondays, the number of positive cases overall has decreased from 48 (2/15/2021) to 38 (2/22/2021) to 24 yesterday (3/1/2021).

While these numbers are still higher than we would like, we are encouraged by the downward trend in our positive cases. Similarly, the number of students in quarantine and isolation continues to decrease, representing a positive step in our efforts to maintain community while safely providing in-person instruction. We still do not see evidence of classroom-based transmission.

Social activities for students

As shared in [a message](#) from Erin Hoffmann Harding and Mike Seamon last week, we are providing more outdoor activities for students and will allow a limited number of students to attend the remaining Men's Basketball games and Volleyball matches at Purcell Pavilion. In addition, as physical distancing capacities allow, students will be permitted to attend regular-season outdoor varsity sporting events during the spring semester.

Mini-breaks

Today is the first of three mini breaks scheduled for the spring semester. While these days can in no way replace a traditional spring break, we are hopeful that they provide our students with a brief respite from the pace of a condensed calendar and our rigorous academic course schedule. We sincerely appreciate the flexibility of the faculty in accommodating these days and the work of our staff members who continue to support campus operations as we give students these small breaks.

Closing thoughts

This week, we offer a special acknowledgement of the amazing student workers who are helping in the testing center. We could not do everything we are doing without them, and we are grateful for their hard work and unflinching good cheer. Please make a point of thanking them whenever you go in for testing. Note below a photo of our all-female Monday testing team. Go Irish!



Please remember:

- Wear your mask
- Practice physical distancing
- Wash your hands frequently
- Complete your daily health checks
- Keep your scheduled testing appointments

Our numbers are getting better. Another vaccine has been approved for use in the United States. The days are getting longer, and the forecast calls for sunshine all week. We hope, despite the many challenges we still face, you find reason for optimism.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Marie Lynn Miranda, Provost
Shannon Cullinan, Executive Vice President