

March 2, 2021

Campus Community:

Beginning the week of February 15, the University experienced a significant and unprecedented spike in numbers of students who tested positive for COVID-19. Prior to February 15, only 17 total positive cases had been identified since classes began in January. From February 15 through today, March 2, 93 students and 1 employee tested positive for COVID-19. Most of the positive cases were identified through our rigorous athletic testing protocols. The spike in cases has strained the University's resources. However, the early identification of these cases through testing will likely assist in slowing and containing the spread of the virus throughout the campus community in the weeks ahead.

The University has 64 students who are currently isolated after having tested positive for COVID-19. Of those, 15 are isolating at home. The remainder are isolated safely on campus. University officials have been working closely with each positive student to continue contact tracing.

COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to faculty, staff, and students studying in the health sciences who are in clinical contact with patients. By the end of this week, 163 employees (approximately 75%) and 65 health science students will have received both doses of the vaccine.

As we approach Spring Break, the University urges each member of the campus community to limit personal travel, especially where high levels of contact with others are likely. Even family gatherings should include social distancing and face coverings. The successful completion of the semester depends on each of us doing our part to prevent another spike, as was experienced this past week.

Here is another reminder of what we all should each be doing:

- Monitor your health and notify someone on campus and/or seek medical attention if you have symptoms.
- Keep 6 feet of social distance between yourself and others (both on and off-campus).
- Wear face coverings (masks or shields) when inside any University facility except while inside your assigned residence room, while alone inside your office, or while eating in the dining room or other designated areas.
- Wear face coverings (masks or shields) outdoors whenever it is not feasible to maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more.
- Agree not to host any off-campus guests.
- Agree not to host or attend in-person social gatherings, particularly when social distancing is not possible.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tim Barry
President



Bruce Blankenship
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Assistant to the President for Special Projects