



August 26, 2020

To: Students, Faculty, and Staff of Wabash College
From: President Scott Feller and Professor Ann Taylor
Re: Important COVID-19 Update

While our intention is to update the community each Monday, at times we will have important news that cannot wait. This is one of those times.

The good news is that our systems are working. Our surveillance testing is identifying asymptomatic cases, and our symptom monitoring app is identifying symptomatic people and keeping them off campus.

As we mentioned Monday, our first round of surveillance testing resulted in a positive test result from an asymptomatic student. In addition, our symptom monitoring program this week identified two students showing signs of potential COVID-19 infection, and the tests administered by the Student Health Center came back positive. In both instances, we followed the CDC's standard protocol of isolating those students with positive test results and quarantining any close contacts.

In consultation with our local health officials, tomorrow we will test all members of the living units where the students with positive test results reside. We're doing this out of an abundance of caution and because of the high percentage of asymptomatic carriers in this particular age group. We have notified those students who will shelter in place and attend classes virtually until their test results and all contact tracing has been completed. We do not expect to routinely test or quarantine an entire living unit, but it is a tactic that we are using right now as we work to understand the level of community spread on campus.

It is important to emphasize that students were honest in reporting their symptoms and their close contacts. This semester is built on trust, and we appreciate students' honesty. We need that good decision making to continue and that effort must extend to proper physical distancing.

Please be on the lookout for a refinement of the question on the symptom monitoring app related to potential contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Based on updated guidance from the Indiana State Health Department, the question now provides more detail on what actually constitutes a contact. All of us must continue to use the COVID Pass app faithfully. We have had fantastic participation this week, and from conversations with colleagues at other colleges, we are clearly setting a benchmark for our peers.

Finally, we need everyone to appreciate the seriousness of our physical distancing guidelines. We are aggressively testing for COVID-19. Between this week's random surveillance sample, the two targeted surveillance samples of living units, and testing of symptomatic students identified by the app, we will be processing over 200 samples. If this pace continues, we will exceed both our testing supplies and the capacity of the SHC personnel. Our contact tracing investigations continue to identify students with very high numbers of close contacts – far more than can be explained by inadvertent interactions. Ask yourself if you have been within six feet of anyone in the past 24 hours and if the answer is yes, change your behavior right now. And remind those around you of the necessity of distancing.

