

Wabash.

September 14, 2020

To: Wabash Community
From: President Scott Feller and Dr. Ann Taylor
Re: Community Update: Week Six

Happy Homecoming week! It is strange to contemplate a Homecoming without alumni, parents, and friends coming home to Wabash. While we are disappointed to miss the game, the dedication of the new stadium, and the opportunities to reconnect with friends, we remain laser focused on completing this semester of residential education for our students. Today we are one-third of the way through the semester's classes, and this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. we will hold the first of [four flu shot clinics](#).

In terms of COVID-19, our sixth week of classes looks like most of the previous five. Random surveillance testing last week had a positivity rate of 1.4%, consistent with previous weeks. A symptomatic student tested positive as well, was isolated, and his close contacts quarantined. We again chose to do targeted surveillance testing on the remaining students in his living unit. Thankfully, all tests were negative, a credit to our fantastic contact tracing team. To summarize where we are for the semester, each week of random surveillance testing has uncovered one or two asymptomatic positive cases, and symptom monitoring has identified between zero and two positive cases. We have mounted two targeted surveillance testing programs, resulting in 14 and zero cases, respectively. All of our positive cases have been students, and we have received no reports of faculty or staff testing positive this semester.

The apparent stability of our community spread and increased confidence in our mitigation tactics were central to the decision to carry out Chapel Sing, a Homecoming rite of passage for new students. Josh Janak, Drew Buttrum, and the Sphinx Club have worked with the Healthy Campus Task Force and the Dean of Students' Office to design safe protocols for both practice and the event itself. Practice sessions are outside and limited to 30 minutes, and participants are masked and spaced out by at least 16 feet. This week's targeted surveillance testing for COVID-19 will focus on Chapel Sing participants. Faculty and staff who wish to observe Chapel Sing are asked to watch from a distance, e.g., through windows in academic buildings. Student spectators will be located in designated areas and must wear masks and maintain physical distancing.

We are simultaneously hopeful and cautious about our COVID-19 prevalence at this point in the semester. Remain vigilant each day. Wash your hands [the Wabash way](#) whenever you use the restroom, touch your mask, prepare or consume food, or come from a large group setting. And please make sure to get a flu shot today or at one of the other clinics planned for this semester.

Our week one update was explicit in pointing out that COVID-19 is on campus, and we conclude our week six report by repeating that this remains true.

With gratitude for you and all you bring to campus,

President Scott Feller

Ann Taylor, Special Assistant to the President for COVID Response and Planning

