



October 20, 2020

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

In yesterday's community update, we noted that not all of last week's surveillance testing results were in and we had not completed the contact tracing investigations necessary to decide if a living unit needed to be quarantined (taking an abundance-of-caution approach by quarantining students not identified as a close contact). While only one additional positive test result was received, our contact tracing led us to quarantine the occupants.

The results of last week – our worst since late August – are because of a breakdown in best practices and behaviors. What is most troubling is the significantly high number of close contacts some students had with others, which runs counter to our primary directives of mask wearing, distancing, and avoiding close contact and crowds. While the number of students in quarantine or isolation is roughly half of what we dealt with in late August, our on-campus quarantine facilities are two-thirds full. It is imperative that students keep their close contacts to a minimum. We must do better.

This increased positivity rate on campus mirrors the infection rates in the larger community and Indiana as a whole, which continue to sky rocket. Please limit your contact with people outside of our COVID Pass daily symptom monitoring program. The first cases of our current outbreak are likely due to contact outside of Wabash.

Because of the large number of close contacts we are seeing and the situation around the state, we will expand our surveillance testing today to nearly 25% of eligible students and will over-sample living units connected to social networks identified in the past few days.

We know this continues to be a challenging semester in every respect and all of us are suffering emotionally. Faculty, staff, and students are dealing not only with a sense of loss but with actual loss. We suggest students choose two or three people to be your circle of support, and bring in one more person who hasn't connected with others. If ever there was a time to demonstrate the strength of the Wabash brotherhood, now is that time. Be your brother's keeper and lend a hand when you notice someone is falling behind or is in trouble. If your brothers aren't holding themselves to the highest standards of our Gentleman's Rule, talk with them. We must work together to make it through the last month of this semester.

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

