

Wabash.

September 4, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of Our Wabash Men,

Thank you for your comments and feedback on last week's letter. Many of you contacted your sons and had good conversations about what they can do to maintain the health of our community. We continue to pound home these lessons this week – wearing masks, washing hands, avoiding crowds and confined spaces, and most important, keeping their physical distance from one other – with or without their masks.

This latter point cannot be over-emphasized. While the number of students receiving positive test results for COVID-19 remains at a manageable level, the number of close contacts those students had with their friends is far too high. In fact, it is not sustainable.

As many of you now know, it is very frustrating for a student to be quarantined because of his close contacts, and in some ways it's worse than having the disease. Students who get too close to someone who is contagious will leave their living unit for 14 days even if they receive negative test results. For more information on this process, please review the [Important Documents](#) section of our COVID-19 website.

I also heard from several parents who were frustrated by the process that unfolded when we unfortunately had to quarantine all students in two living units. I'm sorry that this didn't go as smoothly as it might have. While we hope to not go through such a large quarantining process again, we have nevertheless developed a [checklist](#) that we've asked every student to complete. The checklist is the basis of a plan that students will follow if or when they are asked to quarantine or isolate. We believe that having a plan in place – stored on your son's phone or laptop and shared with his living unit's CARE Team leader – will reduce stress and anxiety at a critical time. As important, the checklist will help your son identify the people with whom he needs to communicate in a timely fashion.

As all of us know, nothing related to the COVID-19 pandemic is easy. We are in constant communication with our health center staff and county health officers, and Dr. Ann Taylor continues to review and revise all of our recommendations and policies based on those conversations. You may use the covid@wabash.edu email address to submit questions, but please review our [COVID-19 website](#) where you may find answers.

I am asking you again this week to help by reinforcing an important message. You have likely seen media reports on the high prevalence of COVID-19 at nearby campuses, particularly Purdue University and Indiana University, where certain living units are experiencing exceptionally high positivity rates.

Today, Dean Redding and I instructed all students to avoid entering any building on these campuses or attending any gathering of college students in West Lafayette or Bloomington. While we understand the desire of our young men to see their friends, especially for freshmen who seek to reconnect with

their high school friends, confined spaces and crowds must be avoided without exception. While some colleges have issued blanket prohibitions against travel off campus, we have chosen to call our young men to think critically and act responsibly. An outdoor visit, physically distanced and masked, with a friend on the patio of a coffee shop or in a park can be valuable for a student's emotional health. Please make sure you son understands the difference between such a visit with friends or family, and attendance at a large gathering without health precautions.

We are at the end of our fourth week of classes and we've completed 25% of our semester. All of us want to continue residential education for your sons, and by working together – students, faculty, staff, and parents – we will.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Feller
President

