



November 11, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We have just shared a message with our student body and their families about an uptick in positive COVID-19 cases within our student community and an increase in the number of students in quarantine. You will soon see these data reflected in our COVID-19 dashboard.

You can read the full message we shared with students below. As we say in our letter, while we are concerned with this development and the associated behavior of some of our students, the University prepared for this semester with the expectation that the virus would visit our campus. We are well-equipped to manage this uptick in cases and are actively monitoring the results of our prevalence testing for any worrisome developments. We are following our safety protocols and prevention and mitigation strategies, as we have all semester. Our staff charged with responding to these situations have done outstanding work.

As we are seeing a surge of new COVID-19 cases around the country, and particularly among young people, we also encourage each of you to continue following the measures that are keeping our community safe, including wearing a mask, physical distancing, and avoiding unnecessary activities.

We will continue to keep you informed of our response to the pandemic and appreciate all you are doing to support our students as we progress toward the end of our semester.

Thank you,

David Hale
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Jeffrey Legro
Executive Vice President and Provost

Dear Students,

COVID-19 cases are rising nationally, in Virginia, and locally with adults aged 20–30 representing a growing share of positive cases. This is a significant challenge for our nation, and for colleges and universities everywhere.

UR is not immune to this trend. Just this week we have witnessed an uptick in positive COVID-19 cases among students and an increase in the number of students quarantined as close contacts of those positive cases. You will soon see these data reflected in our COVID-19 dashboard.

While these cases are associated with a variety of circumstances, what they all have in common is evidence of a retreat from the careful and disciplined practices that have helped ensure the safety of our campus and community thus far. They involve small gatherings without masks and physical distancing, and at least one larger gathering at a local bar. They involve predominantly off-campus events. As we have said all along, these types of activities put our community at risk and undermine the health and safety of our web. Students are strongly encouraged to remain on campus, as we have urged all semester.

An increase in cases is not surprising, though it is preventable. The good news is that we are prepared to respond and are following our safety protocols, as we have all semester. Our prevention and mitigation strategies are working, and our testing protocols and isolation and quarantine spaces have been key components of our efforts.

Our University's Rapid Response Team, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health, is in the process of contact tracing and is reaching out to anyone who may have been exposed in recent days. Many of those individuals have already been placed in isolation and quarantine. We are also actively monitoring our prevalence data for any evidence of increasing positive test results.

We must all remain vigilant in following proper health and safety protocols. At the very top of that list are our requirements to wear a mask, maintain physical distance, and avoid unnecessary gatherings. These measures remain non-negotiable.

Our behaviors now will continue to inform our community health and ability to be in residence into the spring. You owe it to yourselves, to your faculty and staff, to your families, and to one another to continue what you have started and to remain attentive and to take care of yourself this semester and throughout the new year.

Take care and be well,

David Hale
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Jeffrey Legro
Executive Vice President and Provost