Sent on behalf of Dean Soyeon Shim: Campus Instruction

'Dinda Zwicker' via sohe_faculty <sohe_faculty@g-groups.wisc.edu>

Wed 9/23/2020 12:47 PM

To: sohe_faculty@g-groups.wisc.edu <sohe_faculty@g-groups.wisc.edu>; sohe_staff@g-groups.wisc.edu <sohe_staff@g-groups.wisc.edu>; sohegradstudents@googlegroups.com <sohegradstudents@googlegroups.com>

Cc: Soyeon Shim <soyeon.shim@wisc.edu>; Annette Mcdaniel <amcdaniel@wisc.edu>; Susan Bruns <bruns2@wisc.edu>

1 attachments (313 KB)


Dear SoHE community,

Please see below the message from the Chancellor regarding the resumption of limited in-person activities on campus, with further details on instruction attached in a message from the Provost.

I wish to thank you, too, for the input you shared with your department chairs last Friday. Based on that, the chairs and my team had a thorough discussion as to how SoHE should proceed through these next several weeks and beyond for this fall semester, and I encourage you to reach out to your respective chairs for guidance based on this new campus directive.

Meanwhile, we will also be holding a brief, optional SoHE town hall tomorrow morning from 9:00–9:30 via Zoom (see Sue Bruns’ 9/22 message for login details) to discuss this news and answer your questions.

Sincerely,

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From: Chancellor Rebecca Blank <chancellor@uc.wisc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 9:03 AM
Subject: Campus to resume some in-person activities; maintain strict health measures
To our students, faculty and staff,

Thank you for your flexibility, support and renewed attention to public health requirements during these last two weeks as we paused in-person instruction and asked students to restrict their movements due to the number of UW-Madison students testing positive for COVID-19. I know it has not been easy, particularly for those who have had to quarantine or isolate, but these difficult actions were essential to control the spread of COVID-19 on campus and in our community.

No one wanted our semester to start this way, but it has underscored that strict adherence to public health protocols is essential to protecting campus health and operations. Our collective efforts have curbed the number of positive cases and reduced the positivity rate in campus testing over the past two weeks. This is good news and I’m calling on every member of our community to continue efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on campus and take personal responsibility to preserve the gains we’ve made over the past several weeks.

Beginning September 26, we will start to resume campus activity, phasing it in as we continue to track infections. The actions announced below were made in consultation with public health experts and shared governance.

Here is what we are doing that is different from when we opened in early September:
We’ve expanded testing capacity and reduced turnaround time so we can now be much more aggressive in testing to stop infections in the residence halls.

We are working to reduce the concentration of students in the residence halls, encouraging voluntary departures and allowing more students to move into single rooms. We are also prohibiting residence hall students from bringing guests into their hall and limiting the number of people allowed in individual rooms and common areas.

We will continue to hold our students accountable for not following guidelines including emergency suspension, and I’m hoping the county will partner with us in other solutions downtown and in neighborhoods, including continuing to enforce their public health orders in bars and other off-campus spaces linked to the spread of infection.

While we will return to on-campus instruction, it will likely be more limited than before.

These and other efforts can allow us to complete this semester without further interruptions, if they are combined with serious attention to health protocols both on-campus and off-campus.

Here is a guide to the next phase of the semester:

**Testing and Health**

To maintain our progress in reducing infections, we are:

- **Testing more frequently** (once a week) students in residence halls, including comprehensive testing in any location where we see rising numbers of cases. Because our own testing lab is now operating, we are also returning test results more quickly.
- **Expanding contact tracing** – Since early September, we have nearly doubled the number of campus contact tracers, and we continue to hire more.
- Requiring students and employees to respond to contact tracing or face disciplinary conduct (student) or job action (employee)
- Requiring everyone to adhere to all public health protocols, including masking, physical distancing, symptom monitoring, and frequent hand-washing. Everyone who is able to wear a face covering should do so, indoors and outdoors, except during individual exercise.
- Providing easy access to no-cost on-campus testing to anyone in our campus community.
- Continuing surveillance testing, which so far shows no infection problems in any population outside of undergraduate students.
Housing and Student Accountability

*Residence hall students, please see a separate message from University Housing for more details.*

- Housing conduct rules related to partying, non-adherence to public health protocols or gathering in groups of no more than one guest per resident (from the same hall) or 10 in common areas will be strictly enforced and violations will result in immediate termination of housing contracts without refund.

- **If residents do not feel they will be able to comply with these critical behavioral requirements, University Housing will accept contract cancellations through the My UW Housing portal and will return prorated housing funds and unused dining funds.**

- Students and their families – particularly students with all online courses – should assess whether remaining in the residence hall is the right choice for them and request a contract cancellation if they wish to depart.

- Single rooms are currently available for those students who wish to move.

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards will continue to hold students and organizations that choose to not follow public health protocols accountable for their behavior on and off campus.

Instruction

*Instructors, please see a separate message from the Provost for more details.*

- We will phase in in-person instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Some courses, particularly those that require specialized equipment or facilities, will resume, in-person or hybrid, beginning September 26. Students enrolled in these courses will be contacted by their instructors no later than Friday, September 25.

- For all other courses, departments and instructors will determine how to best incorporate in-person activities in order to achieve the learning objectives of the course. Some courses may start in-person immediately, others may be delayed. **Students enrolled in these courses will be contacted by their instructors regarding modified course plans no later than Friday, October 2.** In the interim, unless students hear otherwise these courses will continue to be offered remotely.
• These changes may affect students with disability-related accommodations; they should contact their instructor to discuss any changes to the course. Students can also reach out to their Access Consultant at the McBurney Disability Resource Center if they have questions.

We will also resume some operations in the Unions, Dining, Badger Markets, Recreation and Wellbeing, and Libraries. Please visit the Campus Operations page for more details.

These steps do not mean COVID-19 has been eradicated from UW–Madison. Rather, it means that, thanks to all our efforts, we have bent the curve of positive cases and if we continue to strictly follow public health measures, we can cautiously resume more in-person activities. I continue to be heartened that we have no evidence of virus transmission in classrooms or labs, indicating that our health protocols in these areas are working.

If we see another uptick in positive cases, I will not hesitate to take additional actions to limit the spread of the virus.

I am deeply grateful to the many employees – from facilities to housing, faculty and instructors to health services – who have worked incredibly hard to keep campus running throughout this extraordinary period.

If you have questions, please read these FAQs or email smartrestart@vc.wisc.edu.

Working together we can keep the infection numbers low. Thanks to all of you who are helping make this happen.

Chancellor Rebecca Blank

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