

Halfway through the second week of classes, I wanted to give you a lengthy but important update on a variety of fronts across campus:

- Keep up the excellent work when it comes to face coverings and social distancing. Yesterday, on a regular Covid-19 conference call for regional leaders and health officials, the Virginia Department of Health's Piedmont Health District Director Dr. Robert Nash asked that the University convey to our students his personal appreciation for the excellent public health habits he's seen in practice these first weeks of the semester. Our community appreciates your efforts – let's keep it up.
- Yesterday's news that James Madison is sending the majority of their students home and moving most classes temporarily online is a reminder how quickly Covid-19 can spread and how important it is to keep up our good habits. Poor decisions by just one or a few members of the community can have an enormous impact on the rest of campus. With our smaller size and smaller class sizes, Longwood's current circumstances are very different from JMU, but we remain vigilant. Test results come in daily, and our [Covid dashboard](#) updates daily around 5 p.m. with the number of positive test results from the University Health Center. That number is currently at three. The dashboard also links to the official VDH site, which includes data on all reported cases by locality.
- We've received some questions and feedback about possibly sharing additional information on the dashboard, in particular the number of self-reported positive cases we've heard about from students (i.e. tests administered by providers other than the University Health Center). We have decided to focus on frequent (i.e. daily) updates of information we know for certain, and have had some concerns about conveying information that may not be reliable or verifiable, or which could be misleading or potentially compromise student privacy. However, we are listening to this feedback, looking at what other institutions are doing, and considering how we can responsibly share more. I can tell you that as of this writing, since most students began returning on Aug. 16, two students have notified the University of positive test results, in addition to the three confirmed at the UHC. One has now completed isolation and the other is isolating at home.
- If you have received a positive test result or are awaiting results from an off-campus provider, it is very important for students to inform the University Health Center at 434-395-2102. Our Quarantine Support Team will work with you to ensure care and academic continuity, while protecting your privacy very much part of our practices and policies. Any employees who receive a positive test result are required to inform Human Resources (hrCOVID19@longwood.edu).
- Communication and effective quarantining for those who may be contact exposed are essential to limiting spread of the virus. VDH staff is leading all contact tracing, and will let you know if you are considered contact-exposed and need to go into quarantine. If you have questions, you can also contact the University Health Center.

- JMU's announcement yesterday emphasized their concern about running short of space for students to quarantine or isolate in on-campus housing. That has not been an issue for us so far – Longwood's housing situation and case numbers are very different. Almost all students who have needed to isolate or quarantine (see note on difference below) because of possible contact exposure have been able to do so in their own rooms, in their off-campus housing, or at home. On average, only about 1-2 students per day have needed to stay in our designated on-campus quarantine/isolation space in ARC Hall. We have ample capacity there, and if necessary in other locations, if those numbers increase.
- Altogether, the Support Team in consultation with VDH is currently working with 40 students in total who are in quarantine and 4 who are in isolation. As of this morning's figures, there were two quarantining individuals in ARC. The remainder of those in quarantine or isolation were in their off-campus housing or at their permanent residence. A reminder: quarantine is for those who have been considered contact exposed to positive cases, either at Longwood or elsewhere, even if they have themselves tested negative. Isolation is for those who are themselves positive or presumed positive. The Quarantine Support team works with students to determine when they are cleared to leave quarantine or isolation and communicates with faculty.
- Lastly, I know Convocation is on the minds of many students. Longwood recognizes it is especially important this year to students to preserve rituals and traditions as best we can. It will be different this year – and capping in particular may be more spread out in time and space than the traditional ceremony -- but we very much hope to proceed next Thursday Sept. 10 in some form, with appropriate precautions in place. There will be an email to campus within the next couple days confirming plans.

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