Working Together Through COVID on Campus

Oct. 15, 2020

Dear Campus Community,

Our fall restart plan has been put to its first test this week. Until now, we were among the few campuses to record no positive cases from the start of our fall classes. That changed this week.

As we work through this cluster of cases and share notifications to you, it is important for me to be transparent and share how our plan is working, what else we are doing, and what we need from you.

Along with this communication, I have scheduled a Town Hall meeting on Friday (10/16) at 11 a.m. for faculty, staff and students. This will be recorded and posted tomorrow on the COVID webpage as well if you cannot make that time.

You can watch online here: https://plattsburgh.zoom.us/j/94098525475.

How Our Plan is Working
Our plan anticipated the positive cases we have seen this week. With health and safety as our first and foremost goal, we are prepared to identify and contain cases quickly. Our steps include:

- **Testing.** In addition to weekly pooled surveillance testing of asymptomatic individuals, the college Health Center is testing those who present with symptoms. We also closely coordinate with the Clinton County Health Department to learn of tests that may be conducted elsewhere. We have done nearly 4,500 tests this semester.

- **Isolation.** In the event a student tests positive for COVID-19, the student will immediately be isolated for the required period, either on campus in a designated space or safely off campus per state isolation guidelines. This lasts 14 days. The six students reported this week are in isolation.

- **Quarantine.** Individuals must quarantine when they are directed by the health department to do so. This stems from contact tracing and how close and sustained a person's contact has been with the positive person. Individuals are asked to quarantine in other cases, called precautionary isolation, when someone is awaiting test results or otherwise could be at risk. Currently, 25 students are in quarantine either on or off campus.

- **Notifications and Contact Tracing.** The health department's team of professionals traces all contacts of positive cases to walk back and learn where the person has been and actively aims to find new cases. We assist with this and use the findings.

What Else We Are Doing
Because the privacy of individuals is protected, details are not broadcast. This constrains us in some ways, but we can provide some general information related to the cases. Among the steps taken this week, we have:

- **Paused Athletics Practices.** Cardinal Athletics had been on Phase 1 activity, limiting gatherings of players to less than 10. Because some of this week's cases were student-athletes and out of an abundance of caution, we have stopped all practices.

- **Paused Nursing Clinicals.** With clinicals at CVPH, our nursing students are on the front lines of the health care community. Because one case involved a nursing student, we have also paused one cohort of clinicals.

- **Advancing Notifications to Faculty.** We are working to let teaching faculty know quickly about students who have tested positive using the positive student's class schedule. This is not because isolation or quarantine is required for these faculty or fellow students. Rather, it is to give faculty the agency to make decisions about their instruction, including the opportunity to further consider how to adjust their classes. The county health department will contact professors who have had a positive student who came to class during their contagious period.

**What We Need From You**
Throughout the semester, I have done two things: Walked around campus each day visiting with faculty, staff and students AND treated every person as if they are a positive case. These can both be done safely.

Here's what I ask of you as we work through these cases:

- **Be Active and Aware.** The number of cases in Clinton County and surrounding areas have risen this month. This is a time to be more careful, not less. COVID-19 is real and requires diligence.

- **Do Daily Health Screenings.** These online forms are required and require honesty. These can be used to mitigate spread and make a difference. Don't ignore it.

- **Participate in Testing.** The pooled surveillance testing has had wide participation. But not everyone has made time to do this. I ask you to do so and show your attention by your actions.

We will update you later today on any further positive cases that may occur. Also, the results from yesterday's pooled surveillance testing should be returned from SUNY Upstate Medical University tomorrow or Saturday. We will share those results with you as well.

And always, the latest data and other details are online at [plattsburgh.edu/covid-19](http://plattsburgh.edu/covid-19).

Dr. Alexander Enyedi
President