

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin Guskiewicz, Chancellor, UNC Chapel Hill

FROM: UNC Campus Safety Commission

SUBJECT: Call to Action for Safety of Students, Staff and Faculty as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

DATE: Monday, August 17, 2020

Members of the UNC Campus Safety Commission request your immediate attention to issues raised below regarding threats to the safety and well-being of UNC students, staff and faculty by the rising trend of COVID-19 infections on the UNC campus:

- 1) While we applaud the Roadmap's attempt at transparency with the Carolina Together Dashboard <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/dashboard/>, it has become painfully apparent the 7-day delay in reporting on the Dashboard does NOT allow for real time and actionable understanding by UNC students, staff and faculty regarding COVID-19 cases on/near campus. Indeed, we learned at about 3:20 pm today an additional 135 cases, acquired last week, were added to the Dashboard. This is an approximate 13-fold increase over the previous week. Thus, we ask the Dashboard be updated (a) coincident when Alerts Carolina Emergency Notifications are sent, e.g., those of August 14, 15, and 16, announcing several clusters of COVID-19 on/near campus, and (b) on any other day when the number of cases is large enough to present no realistic privacy concerns. We have to assume the Alerts Carolina Emergency Notifications did not violate concerns about HIPAA and FERPA, given the emergency alerts were in fact issued. Similarly, Dashboard data should be consistent, timely, and relevant for real time and actionable use.
- 2) The recent dramatic increase in emergency alerts of clusters of COVID-19 cases on/near campus beg for a better understanding of the metrics and decision-making points for an "off ramp," whereby UNCCH would pivot to fully remote/online learning and non-residential housing of students, both undergraduates and graduates, excluding those who are homeless or international students. The CSC members continue to be concerned there are no clear and unequivocal decision-points regarding an "off-ramp" from in-class learning and residential housing and that this places students at-risk for COVID-19 infection and threatens their safety and well-being, as well as that of staff, faculty and community members.
- 3) For those students who are found to be positive for COVID-19 infections, please advise CSC members as to the protocols and procedures for the quarantine of the students on campus. As you may know, members of the commission learned this past weekend of instances where quarantined students were subjected to poor and inappropriate treatment. For example, students were not given the full opportunity to collect the necessary items on the quarantine checklist prior to being transported to the quarantine dormitories.

Further, the quarantine dormitories have become nearly full (based on the Dashboard) and were, in at least some instances, not clean or suitable for habitation. Moreover, it is important to appreciate that many UNCCH undergraduates are first-year students and this past week was likely their first time living away from home. Even in non-pandemic times, the challenge to the mental health and well-being of all students living away from home, particularly first-year students, can be hugely burdensome and even life threatening in cases where needed social and psychological support is not accessible.

- 4) Therefore, given the preponderance of the above, the Campus Safety Commission recognizes and applauds your notice today at 4:00 pm that UNC Chapel Hill will pivot to ONLY online/remote learning effective this Wednesday for undergraduates.
- 5) However, we strongly urge you to FULLY DISCONTINUE residential housing, except for those students who have extenuating circumstances, such as being homeless, in unstable family situations/environments that warrant a student's need to remain in residential housing, without an accessible home, who reside outside the United States, or other needs.
- 6) Also, an academic mitigation plan is needed to provide flexibility to students (whether infected or relocating). The sudden change in events may introduce changes/delays in some students' academic performance and hence, the university should offer a guiding statement to departments and faculty to accommodate these changes and to offer flexibility in light of the recent COVID-19 events.
- 7) Further, we suggest the University provide emergency funding to assist students who may have hardships but have a preference to return home and complete remote learning, as well as alternative scenarios for out-of-state and international students who may not be able to go home. A set of best-practices and immediate resources can help students during these difficult times.
- 8) Finally, we ask COVID-19 testing be offered to those departing students who desire such, as a safety measure for themselves and their families.
- 9) Lastly, the CSC kindly asks for your consultation on any future recommendations from the Orange County Health Dept related to the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at UNCCH, like the memo you received on July 29 from Director Quintana Stewart which recommended "virtual classes for the entire Fall Semester, but at minimum begin the first 5 weeks" and "[r]estrict on campus housing to at-risk students with no access to equitable educational resources and those with true housing needs (i.e. International students, Carolina Covenant & marginalized students)." The CSC's advice and counsel should be sought on this and any safety matter, if we are to fulfill our mission and be relevant to you and campus.

This call to action is for the safety and emotional well-being of students, staff, faculty and nearby communities.

Sincerely and on behalf of CSC members,

/Dr. DeVetta Holman/, Co-Chair

/Dr. James Herrington/, Acting Co-Chair