Dear UW-River Falls Campus Community,

The fall semester is upon us! Our students are starting to arrive and the majority of our plans for a safe return to campus have been executed. While we are still finalizing some details and adapting some plans to what continues to be an ever-changing, rapidly evolving environment, I feel confident that we are in a good position. Our testing provider, WHL, is up and running in Hagestad Hall and our COVID-19 Reference Guide continues to be updated on a regular basis.

There are answers to some questions which we still do not have, and there are still some unknowns. However, I would like to address some of the questions we have heard from employees over the past few days:

- **What can I do?** First, stay healthy yourselves. Second, encourage students to follow COVID-19 protocols. Third, reassure students that if they are exposed or get sick, that the university will help them through it. Fourth, for everyone on campus, answer calls from public health departments – don’t ignore them.

- **How does student on-campus testing work?** Attached is a flyer being distributed to students and posted around campus briefly describing our testing protocols for students, as well as our plans for contact tracing, isolation and quarantine. These programs are specifically being offered to our students as we are not offering diagnostic testing of symptomatic employees at this time. Anyone experiencing symptoms should not report to work and should seek the guidance of their health care provider. See [here](#) for more HR-related Q/A. *Please note:* students are already receiving text messages from WHL intended to promote health checks and facilitate scheduling of testing appointments if needed. Please encourage students to reply to these texts. If you learn that a student tests positive or thinks they have been exposed, be sure to inform the UW-River Falls COVID-19 reporting hotline (715-425-4000) or email [contact.tracing@uwrf.edu](mailto:contact.tracing@uwrf.edu).

- **Will we have a data dashboard?** We are developing parameters for access to data on testing, specifically regarding the number of tests recorded, the number and percentage of positive test results, and the relative change in those results compared to the prior week. This is in line with a UW System-Wide Dashboard that will be published in a couple of weeks.

- **What thresholds will we use to determine whether to close campus again?** We are developing a monitoring matrix with a stoplight approach, but please know that there is no one factor that would compel us to reconsider our plans for fall semester. We will be monitoring a range of factors, including campus cases, isolation and quarantine capacity and community measures and will be assessing these circumstances regularly before deciding on any changes.

- **How will UWRF address student behavior and safety off campus?** We are striving to build educational and awareness campaigns for students regarding the importance of their role in fighting the spread of COVID-19. We are involving our student shared governance group as well as talking to student organization leadership, Greek life, and student-athletes. The latest email communication sent to all students reinforcing this message is available [here](#).
What are student “households”? Students living together will be considered a household, which means that in residence halls, when they are in their rooms/suites, they do not have to wear a mask. This also means that they will be encouraged to eat and attend events together as well. Residence hall students must still wear face coverings while in hallways and common areas such as basements, kitchens, restrooms and in the lobby as appropriate (i.e., not when eating, brushing their teeth, etc). Students living together in rental housing off campus will also be considered a household unit. These concepts are important to keep in mind as we consider our role in monitoring and encouraging safe student behavior – those living in a “household” unit will have different expectations.

How are we addressing current issues around anti-racism and protests? Our solidarity and support go out to our colleagues at our sister campus, UW-Parkside, dealing with a great deal of additional unrest and disruption due to the shooting of Jacob Blake. Our thoughts are also with Blake and his family and all those who are impacted by these difficult times. We are reviewing our preparations for facilitating the organization of safe and peaceful protests, knowing that our students will likely want to have their voices heard as well on these important matters.

For more information on any of these topics, refer to the COVID-19 Reference Guide or email covid19@uwrf.edu.

My best,
Connie