Dear Residence Hall Students,

As we move beyond the shelter-in-place timeframe and work to get back to more regular schedules, I want to follow up with you on some things.

Your Investment Matters

First, thank you to everyone who has been adhering to expectations, keeping up with email, and bringing forward questions as they arise. We have heard from so many that you truly want to be here on campus, despite some of the challenges and limitations. I speak for all of us in Residence Life when I say we want that, too. Our work is to support your success as a student and help you grow and develop along the way. To achieve these goals, it is critical that we all do what is necessary to keep our residence halls and community safe from the spread of this virus.

Keys to Success

You are already aware of the need to wash your hands, wear your mask, and watch your distance. As a matter of policy, you must wear a mask anytime you are in the residence hall unless you are in your room, in the shower, brushing your teeth, washing your face, or eating. When you are done with these, please put your mask back on.

While the COVID-19 guidelines might seem simple, there are many variances and interpretations, especially in certain scenarios—inside or outside, with your roommate or with others, eating or not eating, etc. Since March, we have been faced with considering the risk level of what used to be our typical daily activities. We all know that making low-risk choices during the pandemic is integral to remaining healthy and on campus. Attached is some new guidance that I hope will provide clarity regarding some of these common activities.

Additionally, I recognize that we are entering colder months and that socializing outside will be getting more difficult. Many of you have also expressed concerns with the limitations of being able to socialize with others inside your residence hall. We are not ready to change the residence hall guest policy; however, I want you to know we are considering other modifications that would allow more socialization with others in your immediate residence hall community. Stay tuned for more information about this in the next week or so.

Fair Warning

There are two specific expectations that Residence Life staff must hold every member of our community accountable to:

1. **You must adhere to the guest policy.** You cannot have anyone other than you and your roommate in your room, you must not allow anyone else into your own residence hall, and you must not enter any residence hall other than your own.

2. **You must get tested on a regular basis.** You will receive notice via email with your testing window and deadline which will be approximately every two weeks or more often if necessary. Positive COVID-19 cases within the residence halls will be monitored closely. We can only minimize the spread when we are aware of the cases. Regular testing is our only tool to address this issue, especially since people who are COVID-19 positive can have it and not know it.
To keep each member of our community safe, violations of these policies will not be tolerated within the residence halls. If you do not adhere to the guest policy or do not meet your testing obligations, you will be facing removal from the residence halls. It is not possible to manage a safe residence hall environment without upholding these expectations.

**Location Doesn’t Matter**

We are counting on you and those around you to practice low risk behaviors everywhere. Chancellor Foster has addressed that attending or hosting gatherings on or off campus is prohibited. We are also encouraging you to limit travel home and to other locations away from River Falls. If you do go somewhere, it is imperative that you and those around you practice the same things we are expecting from you while on campus and in the River Falls community. It doesn’t matter where you are. Your decisions will impact the potential of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

**Looking Ahead**

Some of you have begun to ask questions about Thanksgiving, winter break/J-Term, and spring semester housing. Please know that we are working on plans and will be communicating with you in the weeks ahead. I recognize you’ve received many emails from our office and others, but please continue to read them and respond accordingly!

**One Final Thought**

While we cannot fully predict or control COVID-19’s impact on our future, as a community we can all work together to minimize its effects and focus on the things that bring us comfort, joy and a renewed emphasis on our educational goals. There is a South African philosophy called **Ubuntu**. Roughly translated, it means *I am because we are*. Ubuntu is defined as a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness that individuals and groups display for one another. It is my hope that as we adjust to living with the threat of COVID-19 on our campus, we will consider the lives and experiences of our neighbors, vote in the upcoming election, and bring more Ubuntu into our lives.

Thank you for hanging in there with us, for asking your questions, and being an important person in our future success.

With Falcon pride,

Karla Thoennes