



Dear Students, Staff, and Faculty,

8/11/2020

We are getting close to the start of our academic year. Here's the latest update. Please take note!

State of Iowa/Dubuque Area COVID-19

- State of Iowa: 525,593 tested; 473,316 tested negative; 49,164 positive (9.4%); 935 Deaths
- Dubuque County: 20,887 tested; 19,140 tested negative; 1,686 positive (8.1%); 31 Deaths
- Dubuque County: 50% positive (ages 18 – 40)

Testing

I have unexpected, but good and hopeful news to report. Last Friday, the Iowa Department of Health and the Iowa Association of Independent Colleges & Universities reported that all 48 not-for-profit higher education institutions could apply for and be accepted to serve as Test Iowa sites. As such, I submitted Loras' desire to do so over the weekend. We assume we will be approved and here is what it means:

- The Loras Health and Wellness Center will be able to administer tests EXCLUSIVELY and ONLY for Loras students, staff, and faculty.
- The tests will be provided FREE for all members of our community whether or not you are from in-state.
- Tests are restricted to those who 1) have symptoms or 2) have been identified as having come into close contact with those who have tested positively.
- Since there will be limited hours, we may still suggest that individuals access the other Dubuque area testing sites, as appropriate.

In my last update, I failed to provide additional testing sites for key Loras partners. These are great options and tremendous supporters of Loras. Further, both are within walking distance from campus:

- Mercy One Hospital Emergency Room: 563-589-8000. Open 24/7. 250 Mercy Dr, Dubuque, IA
- Medical Associates Acute Care. 563-584-3000. Call for times. 1000 Langworthy St. Dubuque, IA

In recent days, we learned there are two additional sites available for our campus community:

- Hartig Drug: 563-588-8702. 1600 University Ave., Dubuque, IA
- Union Family Pharmacy: 563-556-1493. 2541 Central Ave. Dubuque, IA

Given the previously shared list of 4 providers, these additions bring the actual number of local test sites to 8. This figure does not include Loras' own potential designation as a Test Iowa site.

Intercollegiate Athletics

Late yesterday afternoon, the American Rivers Conference Presidents' Council met to further discuss the Fall Sports season, especially in light of last week's unexpected and terribly tardy mandates from the NCAA. Based on the NCAA's infeasible testing standards, legal ambiguity, and impossible financial impositions, the Council believed it had no other choice but to postpone what the NCAA defines as "high risk" sports – Football, Soccer, and Volleyball – until Spring Semester 2021. The Presidents' Council agreed to move forward with Tennis, Cross Country, and Golf as planned for the Fall.

The member institutions of the American Rivers Conference worked long, thoughtful, and creative hours in collaboration to ensure we complied with all the guidelines issued by the CDC, NCAA, and State of Iowa Department of Health. It is disappointing that the NCAA waited until the final hour to issue the mandatory policies.

Though this is disappointing for all of us and it is well beyond our control, I am especially heart-broken for our Fall student-athletes in these four programs and their families. Special thanks to our Athletic Administration, Coaching, Athletic Training, Strength & Conditioning, Facilities, and Health Center colleagues for developing such strong health and safety measures throughout the Summer.

While I look forward to watching six of our Fall programs compete, I am sorry we will all lose out in watching our other four Fall programs. Here's to a better situation in the Spring. In the weeks ahead, we will continue to work with member institutions in developing a Spring schedule for these four programs.

Mask Mandate

Last Thursday, the Dubuque City Council issued a mask mandate for all citizens of the community. This means that all citizens, including college students, must wear masks in all retail and indoor gathering places. This is good news and it aligns with Loras' policies. While the action fell short of addressing gathering density issues, unlike Loras' policies, it was a step in the right direction.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

As students return to campus, you can expect to:

- Receive two face cloth coverings.
- Access hand sanitizing devices at most public entries, exits and gathering places.
- Walk through public temperature check stations that technologically download to the Health & Wellness Center.
- Experience physically distanced classrooms.
- Benefit from signage throughout campus that defines new occupancy standards for all classrooms, meeting rooms, etc.

Dining Services

All five campus dining venues will be open for service. We will modify facility capacities, ensure physical distancing, and provide “grab and go” services.

Conclusion

Given the ongoing implications of the worldwide pandemic, we know that committing ourselves to the following best practices will keep our campus community safe:

- Avoiding “high-risk” activities and places;
- Properly wearing and regularly sanitizing masks;
- Maintaining physical distancing at all times;
- Sanitizing physical spaces before and after use;
- Washing your hands with soap and water often;
- Isolating yourself when not feeling well.

We are all looking forward to a productive, safe and healthy academic year. It is worth noting again that we each have a responsibility to the campus community and others. There is a reason why we regularly talk about ethical decision making, personal responsibility, integrity, human dignity and the common good. #LorasTogether

God Bless,

James E. Collins '84
President
Loras College