

Dear Quincy University community:

Again, welcome back, Hawks! We are so pleased the spring semester is underway. Each of you has been missed!

This message is the eighty-third update on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here's our review of the COVID-19 situation for the Quincy University community:

1. There currently are **no known COVID-19 infections on campus** for QU students. There are no students in quarantine on the QU campus. Quarantine facilities are available on campus, in the event they are needed.
2. Approximately 250 COVID-19 tests were administered on campus for students coming to QU for the spring semester. There were **no positive test results**. Other students have submitted negative test results as a result of tests taken elsewhere, in order to meet our entry testing requirements for the spring semester.
3. We are aware of **two active COVID-19 cases for QU students who presently are off campus** and in quarantine. Four additional off-campus students are in quarantine because of close contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19.
4. Mandatory surveillance testing for COVID-19 is being conducted this semester for **student athletes**. The frequency of testing for each student athlete depends on the frequency and nature of student contact in each individual sport, as designated by the NCAA.
5. As previously described in emails sent by Dr. Tracy, **mandatory surveillance testing** for COVID-19 also is being conducted this semester for **non-student athletes** who are taking one or more courses on the QU campus. This is a new requirement for non-student athletes and is intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among those who are infected and asymptomatic. Dr. Tracy's emails to students have described this new surveillance testing requirement in detail, with about a third of non-student athletes being tested each week. This rapid surveillance testing takes very little time to complete and does not involve physical discomfort for the student taking the test.
6. Faculty, staff, and vendor employees should continue to **seek out COVID-19 testing** when they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms, usually at the Adams County rapid testing center, at the Blessing Hospital testing center, or on the QU campus. Those faculty, staff, and vendor employees

seeking to arrange a rapid COVID-19 test on campus should contact Dr. Tracy directly.

7. The best way to reduce our risk for COVID-19 infection is the consistent use of **masking, distancing, and good hand hygiene**. All members of the QU community should continue to follow these public health safety guidelines as we begin the new semester.

8. For any student currently living on the QU campus and for all employees, it is essential that students, faculty, and staff **report symptoms** of anything that might be COVID-19 as soon as possible. While some of us might be tempted to avoid reporting a symptom on the grounds that the symptom seems minor, a healthcare professional, not an individual student or employee, should make this determination. **There is no acceptable reason for failing to inform us about a medical symptom that might point to COVID-19.**

9. **If you intend for any reason to have a COVID-19 test** or you have taken a COVID-19 test not arranged by the university, no matter where you are living right now, **please contact Dr. Tracy** with the details of your situation.

10. New guidance regarding COVID-19 testing, safety, and quarantine protocols continues to be announced by federal, state, and county sources. Updates to our policies and procedures will be announced by email as those updates are available, including any information we might receive about COVID-19 vaccines.

If you are a member of the QU community and have not read the previous update messages, you could search them out in your email folders or read them at <https://www.quincy.edu/coronavirus/>. The next COVID-19 email update from the university is anticipated no later than February 8, 2021.

Local and State Reports on COVID-19 Cases

As background for our safety measures at QU, we continue to report local and statewide COVID-19 information to all members of our community. Because the pandemic was declared nine months ago, it is no longer useful to report total case numbers. We will continue to provide active case counts and current hospitalizations. In the **Quincy region (i.e., Adams County)**, there are 299 active cases at present. There are 27 current hospitalizations in Adams County linked to COVID-19. One Missouri resident has died in Adams County of causes related to COVID-19, as have 103 Adams County residents. Information about COVID-19 cases in Illinois, including county-by-county reports, is available at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>. QU updates on COVID-19 cases are taken from the public reports of state and county agencies.

Missouri reports its COVID-19 cases for the past seven days and does not provide daily updates to its COVID-19 summary. Information about COVID-19 in Missouri is available at <https://showmestrong.mo.gov/data/public-health/>.

Announcements for the Beginning of the Spring Semester

At present, and if there are no other increases in local or state COVID-19 alert levels or relevant changes in government policies, QU plans to **resume some indoor campus dining** in the next two weeks. Announcements about indoor campus dining will be made via email. Please be patient as we work to provide our community with the safest possible indoor dining experience.

As we noted earlier this month, and at the risk of oversimplification, it is the position of the Roman Catholic Church that **the currently available COVID-19 vaccines in the United States are morally acceptable**. If you have questions about the Catholic position regarding the current COVID-19 vaccines, President McGee and other members of our community with expertise on this question, including Fr. John Doctor, would be happy to discuss the matter with you.

Finally, we are pleased to report that many QU faculty, staff, and vendor employees were eligible to receive **COVID-19 vaccinations** this week in Adams County, Illinois, and a substantial number of them did so. For example, Dr. McGee and Dr. Tracy have both received their first vaccination, and their second injections will occur in a few weeks. Some students on campus also have had vaccinations, whether in Adams County or elsewhere, usually because of their work away from campus. We will continue to provide information about vaccination in Adams County as that information is available to us.

We thank all those Adams County healthcare and public health professionals who have worked with us to keep the QU community safe. All of us at QU have consistently received outstanding COVID-19 support from our local government and healthcare organizations.

Today, January 26, has been Australia Day, an important national holiday with many special events and when an Australian of the Year is named. Not all Australians are excited to celebrate Australia Day, but we congratulate those who do, including members of the QU community who have Australian connections.

Sadly, we read that squirrels have been introduced to the environment in Australia and are regarded by the government there as an “extreme threat.” We sympathize with you, Australia.

It’s a new year, a new semester, and a new opportunity for us to learn and grow as members of this community. Despite the snow and cold weather in the forecast, we are glad you are back, and we hope you feel the same way. It’s always a great day to be a Hawk!

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian McGee, President

Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development