

Dear Quincy University community:

We know, we know. In a typical semester, you'd be in the middle of spring break. In a year when nothing has been easy, it's no surprise that we have to wait until the Easter/Passover weekend to get a holiday. We just continue to overcome adversity, Hawks.

This message is the eighty-sixth 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. **One** QU student currently has an active **COVID-19 infection**. This student is in quarantine on campus.
2. Because of **close contact** with persons known to have active COVID-19 infections, three other students are currently in quarantine on the QU campus. Another seven QU students are in quarantine off campus. As a reminder, these students have not tested positive for COVID-19 and may never have a positive test.
3. **COVID-19 vaccination is having a direct impact on campus safety and campus life**. As an example, despite contact with a person known to be infected, two students this week were exempt from the requirement to quarantine because they had been fully vaccinated.
4. During the spring semester, approximately **200-300 COVID-19 tests** have been administered on campus each week as part of our programs for surveillance testing.
5. There have now been a total of five COVID-19 cases on campus since the start of the spring semester in January, with four student cases and one staff case. Four of those five cases are no longer considered active infections.
6. Some QU students are required to participate in **COVID-19 surveillance testing provided through their local employers in Quincy**. As a result, more testing of QU students is taking place than is reported in this email message. Again, we ask all students to report their test results to Dr. Tracy.
7. 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. **We are aware of one COVID-19 infection involving a faculty, staff, or vendor employee in these first five weeks of the spring semester.**

8. 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.
9. 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.**
10. **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.
11. 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.
12. For a variety of reasons, many QU faculty, staff, and vendor employees have received one or both shots of a **COVID-19 vaccine**. Some students also have received the vaccine, usually because of the nature of their employment, volunteer work, or a pre-existing medical condition. We continue to appreciate the good work of the Adams County Health Department in getting people vaccinated.

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/>.

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 about a year 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 17 active cases at present. There are seven current hospitalizations in Adams County linked to COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, one Missouri resident has died in Adams County of causes related to COVID-19, as have 115 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

Today is St. Patrick's Day, and many of Dr. McGee's ancestors, with Irish last names like Houlihan, O'Hara, and Hogan, would have appreciated support for Ireland and Ireland's patron saint. For this particular St. Patrick's Day, **we ask you to avoid large gatherings this evening**, as we don't need to create a new COVID-19 risk.

Dr. McGee is alarmed to notice the many internet sites falsely link squirrels to the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Does anyone really need a "lucky squirrel" Irish-themed t-shirt? We think not. See <https://www.amazon.com/Saint-Patricks-Day-Squirrel-Shirt/dp/B0795XCCJM>

For those of us living in Quincy, Illinois, please note that the grey squirrel typically found on the QU campus is an invasive species in Ireland. Specifically, the grey squirrel is threatening the habitat of the smaller red squirrel that is native to Ireland. So, Dr. McGee warns the Hawk nation that our campus squirrels are not friends of the Irish (or anyone else).

Be safe, Hawks.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian McGee, President

Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development