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October 29, 2020: Letter from the President- Covid-19 Update

Kettering University

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Oct. 29, 2020

Dear Members of the Kettering Community:

We are in a fight against COVID. To be successful, we must commit to being personally responsible and to being an accountable member of the Kettering and Flint community. We have worked hard to provide our students with the opportunity to return to campus for face-to-face instruction. It is important for students to realize that our efforts are not just for their benefit and that of their fellow students, but for everyone on our campus and in our city as well.

If we are to continue in-person, every one of us must commit to following the health and safety recommendations we have established not just on campus, but in the dorms, classrooms, fraternities and sororities, independent houses, and in the community. This includes informing the Wellness Center promptly, completely, and without hesitation when you suspect that you may be ill, or if you know of possible COVID exposure in our community; keeping records of attendance at events, gatherings, clubs, and classes to facilitate and speed contact tracing; protecting yourself and others in high-traffic areas or settings where physical distancing isn't possible; adhering to capacity limits in social situations or group dining, and, modifying your actions and encouraging others to do the same as guidelines and recommendations change over time.

Recent Events on Campus

As reported in earlier communications from the COVID Task Force, over the past several days, through our surveillance and voluntary testing of faculty, staff, and students, we have identified a small number of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in our community. Of these one is a faculty member, 5 are members of a fraternity, and one is a resident of Thompson Hall. Three additional students attended an off-campus party that put them at risk for exposure. All have been contacted, and quarantined/isolated/departed campus as appropriate, and contact tracing for all is underway.

Specifically:

- The individual in Thompson who tested positive left the residence hall voluntarily and returned home shortly after their test result was received. That person is not on campus.
- All students involved in the off-campus party have tested negative.
- Because we could not reliably determine which students might have been exposed to the individual who tested positive, we restricted access to Thompson Hall, and required all residents to remain in the Hall. We then instituted mandatory COVID testing of all residents, those at highest risk on Monday, those at lower risk on Tuesday. We also extended testing on Tuesday more broadly to include voluntary surveillance testing of the

community. Over 277 individuals were tested on Tuesday alone.

- Yesterday we learned that all of the tests for residents of Thompson Hall were negative.
- Unfortunately, we also learned at the same time:
 - That five members of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity tested positive, and
 - that a number of students who live in Thompson Hall participated in Rush activities at the fraternity.
 - We are unable therefore to relax our restrictions on Thompson Hall residents as we had planned until those potentially exposed at the fraternity can be identified and contacted. That process is underway.
- Also, unfortunately, the tests of Thompson Hall residents we performed earlier this week were done too soon after this latter exposure to detect potential virus transfer at the fraternity, since tests performed earlier than 4-5 days after exposure are unreliable and have very high false negative rates.
- The faculty member who tested positive has not been on campus or in class since receiving their test result. Four other faculty members as well as a number of students with whom they were in close contact have or are being contacted and testing for all has been arranged.

Next Steps:

Out of an abundance of respect for the health of our community, and to give our contact tracing and Wellness Center colleagues sufficient time to ensure that all individuals potentially exposed in one of the situations described above have been identified and tested, I believe it is prudent to pause and temporarily suspend our delivery of face-to-face instruction on-campus for three days: tomorrow, Friday, October 30, through next Tuesday, November 3. Unless the situation changes, normal class operations will resume on Wednesday, November 4.

During this period classes are not cancelled. The University will be open. We are simply moving all classes to virtual only instruction. However, movement of students on campus during this time will also be restricted to the Campus Center for meals, and to Thompson Hall for residents only. The AB and Mott buildings will be closed to students without the express permission of the Dean of Students. The Recreation Center will be closed to all users. Faculty and staff should continue to operate as before.

During this period, all students are encouraged to remain in place, observe all COVID safe personal and group practices, and limit their contact with others until classes resume next Wednesday, November 4.

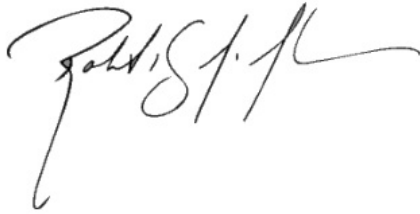
Testing Friday:

Open COVID-19 testing will be available from 9 a.m. to noon in the Abbey for students or employees who have NOT been tested this week. If you were tested Monday or Tuesday of this week, please do NOT attempt to be retested during this time unless directed by the Wellness Center or HR.

Human Resources and the Wellness Center are reaching out directly to those identified through contact tracing with specific testing instructions. These individuals should not attempt to be tested in the Abbey.

For those who were not tested on Monday or Tuesday, but who wish to be tested, no appointment will be necessary. You will however only be able to enter the Campus Center to access the Abbey through the main front doors, and you will be required to complete your daily health check before you do so. If you believe you have been exposed to the virus, or you present other symptoms of infection, do not come to campus. Instead, students should contact the Wellness Center and employees the Department of Human Resources for further direction.

Thank you for your diligence and for your commitment to make this a successful term for the entire Kettering Community. We cannot achieve this without your help.



Dr. Robert K. McMahan
President and Professor of Physics
Chair, COVID-19 Response Team

The logo for Kettering University, featuring the word "Kettering" in a large, white, serif font above the word "UNIVERSITY" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, all contained within a black rectangular box.