

Monday, Sept. 7, 2020

Dear members of the YHC campus community,

Last Wednesday, the YHC campus began experiencing a substantial increase in the number of confirmed positive COVID-19 tests among residential students. Between Aug. 17, when classes began, and Sept. 2, more than a dozen students were tested, but none were found positive via a molecular test, as required for confirmation under Georgia Department of Public Health procedures. Since then, more than three dozen residential students have tested positive and been placed in isolation, while those in close contact with them have been placed in quarantine. This has necessitated two key changes to our plans:

- **Tomorrow, Tuesday, Sept. 8, all on-campus class meetings are cancelled.** Classes that take place entirely off campus, such as student teaching, internships and Young Harris Early College courses, are not affected.
- **Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 9, all on-campus classes will shift to fully online delivery.** This modality will remain in place until at least Monday, Sept. 21, and it may be extended if necessary. Again, classes that take place off campus are not affected.

Campus offices will continue to operate as scheduled, with previously announced face covering and social distancing requirements in place. Faculty members may work from home or from their offices. Staff members will continue to report to work unless alternative arrangements have been approved by their supervisors. Dining facilities will continue to operate as scheduled.

To date, contact tracing suggests that all viral transmission on campus has occurred in residential facilities. There are currently no confirmed cases among College employees, Sodexo employees, or commuter students, nor is there any indication of transmission in instructional facilities, dining facilities or athletics facilities. This suggests that de-densification efforts in these spaces, coupled with mandatory face coverings and enhanced hygiene protocols, have helped curb the potential for transmission.

With the number of students required to isolate or quarantine, instructors of in-person sections have increasingly had to work individually with students who cannot attend class as scheduled. This temporary shift to fully online delivery is intended to provide all instructors with the opportunity to focus on just one delivery mode, and to provide all students with comparable learning opportunities. The College community should expect to return to in-person instruction once this spike in student isolation and quarantine cases has subsided.

On behalf of President Van Horn and the other members of the Pandemic Recovery Task Force, thank you for your continued flexibility and grace during this unpredictable and unparalleled situation. Please continue to monitor your health and adhere to all safety protocols.

Yours,

Jason A. Pierce, Ph.D.
Provost