Dear Campus Community,

If you have followed the Hiram College COVID-19 Advisory Alert System and Dashboard across the past many weeks, you have noticed that we have held steady with seven confirmed cases since the end of August. While our campus community has continued to be responsible in following recommended public health protocols and our optimism about the term remains strong, we will observe an increase on the dashboard this week.

On Monday we became aware of a student who was exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Upon providing a rapid test it was confirmed that the individual was indeed COVID-19 positive. This student is currently housed in isolation on campus.

Further, and in line with our established protocols regarding the handling of positive COVID-19 test results, this student worked with the Hiram Health Center to develop a contact tracing list. Specifically, those who have had high risk exposure to the symptomatic student were immediately contacted and administered COVID-19 tests. While most involved received negative test results, two did test positive and are now in isolation. The tests of all students involved are being confirmed via PCR testing. Fortunately, each of our three students in isolation is doing well, as two are exhibiting minor symptoms and the third is asymptomatic.

If you are friends with any of our students who have tested positive or have been quarantined, please check on them virtually and ensure that they know that their community supports them. Isolation and quarantine can be lonely times, and Hiram College is a place where we support our community members to help them through difficult times. This pandemic is no exception. As a reminder, the distinctions between isolation and quarantine are described on page 6 of the Student Guide for Return to Campus.

As COVID-19 can affect any of us unsuspectingly and indiscriminately, we urge everyone to remain vigilant and mindful of the many things that each of us must continue to do, daily, to remain as safe as possible. For example, the students mentioned in this update acted quickly to ensure that they alerted the Health Center which allowed them to receive proper health care and professional guidance from the Health Center staff. Their efforts also helped us, in a swift and efficient manner, identify and connect with others involved. Thus, if at any time you experience symptoms of COVID-19 or become aware of someone who may be at risk or indicating symptoms, please contact the Health Center immediately.

Last, alongside sharing this latest information, we also would like to inform you that random prevalence testing for COVID-19—for faculty, staff, and students—-is being introduced to campus at this time. As per Ohio Governor DeWine’s recommendations, Hiram has begun prevalence testing of randomly selected faculty, staff, and students. The purpose of prevalence testing is to ensure that any asymptomatic spread of the virus on campus is detected and contained in a timely manner. If you have been informed that you have been selected for testing, it is mandatory that you call the Health Center at 330-569-5418 to discuss next steps.

Be Well,
Asha

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