

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

PRE-FILED RESOLUTION

(Final; Action)

RS.20.06 Urbana-Champaign Senate Resolution on CDC Guidelines and Student Isolation/Quarantining

WHEREAS Chancellor Robert J. Jones and Provost Andreas Cangellaris have stated that the university will comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)¹;

WHEREAS the CDC guidelines for universities state that once students arrive on campus, universities should “actively encourage students, faculty, and staff who are sick or have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home or in their living quarters (e.g., dorm room)”;

WHEREAS the CDC guidelines state that in lieu of a student self-isolating in his or her “dorm room,” universities may choose to identify “an isolation room, area, or building/floor (for on-campus housing) to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms”;

WHEREAS the CDC guidelines state that students “identified with COVID-19 or identified as contacts of individuals with COVID-19 should not necessarily be sent to their permanent homes off-campus” because “sending sick residents to their permanent homes could be unfeasible, pose logistical challenges, or pose risk of transmission to others either on the way to the home or once there”;

WHEREAS the CDC guidelines instruct universities to “work with local public health officials to determine appropriate housing for the period in which they [students] need to self-isolate and monitor for symptoms or worsening symptoms”;

WHEREAS a recent mathematical model produced by Philip Gressman (UPenn, Math) and Jennifer Peck (Swarthmore, Economics), based on a residential university of 20,000 students, measures the number of students who will need isolation or quarantine at any given time in a variety of scenarios, with the “Standard Intervention” scenario coming closest to conditions expected to obtain at our university (which will more likely have around 40,000 returning students—a critical difference that will be addressed below);

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

WHEREAS this model’s “Standard Intervention” scenario projects “the combination of quarantine and contact tracing, universal mask-wearing, daily randomized testing of 3% of the university community, and transitioning all classes with 30 or more students to online-only interaction”;

WHEREAS this Standard Intervention model further assumes that each student would have 8 academic contacts per day, 4 with lower virus communication danger (sitting in a classroom with a mask and spaced 6 feet from the nearest student), 4 with higher communication danger (meetings with other students for group activities outside class); 1 close residential contact (roommate or very close neighbor) per day; and 2 broad social contacts per day (dining halls or restaurants, social events, extracurricular activities);

WHEREAS the results of this modeling suggest that with these standard mitigation measures (masking, social distancing, limited class sizes and limited social contact outside the residence hall) the cumulative median number of new infections at the end of the semester for this model (based on 20,000 students) would be 43 and at most 65 and that the peak median number of students requiring quarantine would be 150, with 602 unique individuals (3% of the entire student population) needing to be in quarantine at some time during the semester (for the full study see <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2006.03175.pdf>);

WHEREAS this model’s Standard Intervention conditions for student testing (3% of students getting randomized tests per day, 100% over the course of a month), contact tracing for all positives, mitigation measures (mask wearing, social distancing), some in-person instruction, limited close residential contact and some broad social contact, correspond very closely to the conditions our COVID-19 task force has set as the conditions for our fall opening;

WHEREAS perfect compliance with all of these conditions may not be necessary for a manageable fall semester (that is, one that remains within the bounds of the housing and isolation units that are made available to students),² and the university may be able to improve upon some of these conditions by the fall with careful planning;³

WHEREAS, applying the study’s Standard Intervention model to our campus, it is possible that at the University of Illinois— assuming that we have 40,000 students on campus in the fall (fewer than the potential 50,000, but a realistic projection)—the cumulative number of

² The model suggests that the median number of infections at any given time is differentially sensitive to different variables. For example, it says that “allowing in-person meetings of large classes increases infection from 43 to 538 in the median simulation run,” whereas “not wearing masks increases median infections to 131” [p.10]. Obviously, it will be critical to have both widespread compliance with health precautions and to move large classes online. Both of these conditions are part of our university’s fall opening plan.

³ For example, the university may be able to increase the availability and precision of testing and tracing over the conditions assumed in the model. Similarly, the rate of positivity in Champaign outside of the campus community may be lower than is assumed in this model; and students may be willing to comply with restrictions on outside social interactions that improve upon the assumptions in this model.

infections and peak median number of students needing quarantine could remain low enough to allow for a manageable fall semester;⁴

Whereas Alma Sealine, Executive Director of University Housing, stated that “the number of quarantine/isolation spaces available within University Housing will be 5% of our occupancy at the time; for example, if we have 90% occupancy, then we will have 400 spaces available, but if we have students in all-singles, we will have approximately 250 spaces available” (private email communication to Bruce Rosenstock, 6/4/2020);

WHEREAS University Housing has decided to retain doubles and not go to an all-singles arrangement;

WHEREAS University Housing, on the assumption of 90% occupancy, has already set aside 5% of the remaining rooms (400 spaces) for isolation and quarantining, and could set aside as many as another 5% (an additional 400 spaces);

WHEREAS, based upon the Gressman-Peck Standard Intervention model as applied to our university with 40,000 students returning to campus (see footnote 4 for details), University Housing has the ability to set aside enough spaces (from 5% to 10%) to accommodate the Standard Intervention scenario’s projected numbers for all students needing isolation and quarantining, even when the numbers reach their peak;

WHEREAS it is counter-indicated by the CDC guidelines (quoted above) that infected students or students needing quarantining should travel home, due to the likelihood of spreading the virus during transit and afterwards both to the student’s family members and to the community in the destination area;

WHEREAS a report on reopening Connecticut universities prepared by former Yale University President Richard Levin and Linda Lorimer, former vice president of global and strategic initiatives at Yale University, co-chairs of the education committee of the Reopen Connecticut

⁴ Though it is not possible to derive the exact predicted numbers for a 40,000 person campus from this model, the model does suggest the types of conditions that might in principle allow a residential campus to maintain a manageable number of infections at any given time. In a private email correspondence (6/29/2020), Philip Gressman, one of the two lead authors of the study, informed the author of this Resolution that, *ceteris paribus*, the cumulative number of infections and the peak number of students needing quarantining in a 40,000 student campus will likely be somewhere between 2 to 4 times the numbers for a population of 20,000 students, depending on the “profile of class sizes that you have,” whether it is 35 as in the model or much higher. Therefore, even if one cannot extrapolate exact projections from the Gressman-Peck modeling for a 40,000 person residential campus, it is possible that the campus could limit new infections to a median number ranging from 96 to 192, with at most 130 to 260, and that the peak median number of students requiring quarantine would be 300 to 600, based on the Standard Intervention conditions without any improvement. In his private correspondence, Gressman stressed the critical need for administrators to have settled upon an automatic trigger for campus lockdown and evacuation. Since, as this Resolution argues below, it would pose a serious public health risk to send home students who are sick or in quarantine, one viable trigger might need to be based on whether the capacity and occupancy levels available for the isolation and quarantine of students who become ill on campus can be met.

Advisory Group, advises that “residential colleges should have plans to monitor and provide medical care to infected students who test positive and are isolated” (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/News/20200506-Recommendations-to-Governor-Lamont-for-a-phased-reopening-of-colleges-and-universities.pdf?la=en>);

WHEREAS Richard Levin, in a NY Times Magazine article “Covid State” (June 3, 2020), is quoted as saying in reply to a question about preparations for shutting down the university in a severe outbreak:

Talking to public-health officials in Connecticut, we concluded that in a full-blown outbreak, you don’t send home students who are sick or in quarantine because they were in contact with sick people. That would be a public-health risk, so you wait until they’re not infectious. But you might test the rest of the students and send home the people who were negative.

WHEREAS students will have an incentive not to voluntarily report or quarantine or self-isolate if they believe that they will need to travel back home to isolate, and if they fear that doing so may transmit the virus to family members at home or to others during their travel home; and

WHEREAS public health policy and medical ethical considerations weigh in favor of making available the same level of care to all our students when they need to isolate or go into quarantine;

WHEREAS the COVID-19 Task Force subcommittee for University Housing has divided its plans for student isolation and quarantining into two groups of unequal size: (1) students with housing contracts (freshmen, plus a small number of others) and (2) a larger number of students without housing contracts⁵;

WHEREAS students with housing contracts who cannot travel back home will be offered the option of quarantining or isolating in one of the 400 spaces mentioned above that will be set aside for this purpose by University Housing in cooperation with the McKinley Health Center;

WHEREAS the larger number of students without housing contracts under the current plan will not be offered the option of using one of these 400 isolation units and will instead either need

⁵ See the answers by Vice Chancellor Sean Garrick and Vice Chancellor Danita Brown Young to Question 10 on the COVID-19 Briefing video, <https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/1592587.html>. Vice Chancellor Garrick describes the students with housing contracts and says: “Given that a significant number of our students are from Illinois, we imagine that they will be able to go home for recovery, if it’s appropriate, meaning if the travel is easy or convenient or – well there are too many variants, if it’s appropriate, let’s just leave it at that” (30:53-33:59). Concerning the off-campus students, Vice Chancellor Brown Young says that “we will work with CUPHD to help them find some adequate space” and “CUPHD has some partnerships with local hotels” and she further explains that “typically, we’ve had these type of illnesses before, most students do like to just go home, so they could have that option to go home, whether they’re living on campus or off campus, to do their isolation and their quarantine” (36:34-37:14).

to remain in their off-campus housing, return to their permanent home, or apply to the Champaign Urbana Public Health Department to use one of the rooms they have set aside for quarantining and isolation;

WHEREAS the Champaign Urbana Public Health Department has reserved and paid in advance for 86 rooms in two local hotels for community members to isolate or quarantine⁶;

WHEREAS 86 rooms may well be inadequate for the isolation and quarantining needs of our approximately 30,000 off-campus students, especially if shared with over 100,000 residents of Champaign and Urbana, given the mathematical model described above and reasonable possibilities concerning demand for such units;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that it is the sense of the Urbana-Champaign Senate that University Housing, in conjunction with the McKinley Health Service, should make available isolation and quarantine space to any student who tests positive with COVID-19 and to any student who is informed that the student should quarantine, whether or not the student has a Housing Contract, so that the student can choose to remain safely on campus with regular food delivery and proper monitoring;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the sense of the Urbana-Champaign Senate that if a rise in the daily average of positive tests causes us to approach our set-aside room capacity for isolation and quarantine with the likelihood of exceeding this capacity, in the event that this triggers a decision by the university and public health authorities to evacuate all the students, the university should only send home students who test negative and should continue to provide additional rooms for any students who would prefer to isolate and quarantine on campus before returning home;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that it is the sense of the Urbana-Champaign Senate that all the costs associated with isolation and quarantining of our students should be borne by the university as part of its plan to maintain a safe and healthy campus during the pandemic.

Submitted by
Bruce Rosenstock
Senator, Department of Religion, LAS

⁶ Information about CUPHD quarantining and isolating plans was provided to the author of the resolution by Ms. Laura Raney, the manager of the two hotels (Comfort Suites and Roadway) that have contracted with CUPHD for this purpose. The hotels have set aside special floors for quarantining and isolation, and community members request their use through the COVID-19 Hot Line, and are required to remain in their room for the duration of the stay with no-contact delivery of food packages ordered through Instacart or other delivery services, self-service cleaning with special vacuum sweepers and disinfectant products provided. The halls are monitored by recording cameras and any violation of the shelter in room requirement will be followed by an expulsion order.