



*Vice President
Marketing and Communications*

October 23, 2020

Dear Residents of the Town of Fairfield,

The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and extended community is a top priority for Fairfield University as we continue operations during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to maintain academic continuity, foster community vibrancy, and ensure the ongoing safety of our wider community, Fairfield developed and enacted a six-layered, integrated approach that exceeded state requirements.

Fairfield University will remain vigilant and proactive in our approach to managing Covid-19 throughout this semester and as long as required. As the First Selectwoman has noted, yesterday the State Department of Public Health has moved the Town of Fairfield into the red-alert level.

In an effort to further clarify our policies and procedures, and to explain our dashboard for those who have had difficulty understanding and interpreting the data, we would like to share the following information:

- ***Fairfield's active positive cases currently represent fewer than 1% of our total University population and have never exceeded 2%.*** No one in our population has required hospitalization, nor has anyone required extensive medical intervention.
- As of Thursday, October 22, Fairfield has **17** positive cases in isolation on campus and 32 students in quarantine, and we expect this downward trend to continue. To satisfy the concern of our parents, who preferred that quarantined students not be in the same location as students in isolation, we have physically separated those contacts who have tested negative to a hotel in Bridgeport, and have kept our on-campus beds (64 rooms) for isolation. Both students in isolation and in quarantine get all meals delivered, have regular check-ins with University personnel, and maintain continuity with their academic curriculum virtually.
- In order to improve our community's understanding of the data, Fairfield has evolved our dashboard to provide a significant amount of information on a daily basis. This includes daily testing and positivity rates, cumulative testing and positivity rates of our employee and student populations, as well as bed utilization, students on watch, and charts to give readers a sense of trends and positivity rates. Fairfield also breaks down the results into testing groups: 1. Those who are randomly selected (surveillance testing), 2. Those who are tested as a part of a targeted group (selected), and 3. Those that have presented with symptoms and/or are contact-traced (diagnostic). We expect diagnostic and selected populations to have higher positivity rates than surveillance, as it is a proactive testing strategy in populations where we expect cases. In addition to the dashboard, Fairfield is using algorithms and data trends to proactively monitor and manage Covid-19.
- **Fairfield is now testing a significant portion of our University population Monday through Friday.** Our Student Health Center operates seven days a week and has been certified as an approved lab in the State of Connecticut, distinguishing us from other universities in the state. We are utilizing state-of-the-art Abbot ID

Now Analyzers – five are currently operating on campus and we expect more to arrive over the next few weeks. Each analyzer can test 16 individuals per hour.

- These analyzers are in addition to the weekly surveillance and targeted testing that we perform utilizing the Broad MIT Laboratory out of Cambridge Massachusetts, and Griffin Hospital/Jackson Laboratories. Fairfield has also implemented wastewater testing; we are among the first universities in the state to do so.
- Fairfield University continues to be in regular contact, and in some cases daily contact, with: the State of CT Governor's Office, the State of CT Public Health Department, the Town of Fairfield First Selectwoman's Office, the Town of Fairfield Public Health Department, and the Federal Covid-19 Task Force, which includes Dr. Anthony Fauci and Vice President Mike Pence. **In all cases, Fairfield University's plan has been endorsed as a comprehensive, thorough, and exceedingly strong Covid-19 re-opening and sustainability plan.**
- At the start of the fall semester, comprehensive re-population testing helped us to bring students, faculty, and staff back to campus. Upon arrival, our entire population was tested, and no one was permitted back to campus who had a positive Covid-19 result. This re-population testing included off-campus undergraduate students as well as our graduate student population.
- To best protect the health and safety of our community, Fairfield has made significant changes to our campus facilities to ensure proper hygiene, education, and workspace well-being. From the beginning of the semester, classrooms were restructured, masks have been mandated, and group meetings of 10 or more have not been permitted. In addition, residential students may only enter their own residence halls, visitors to campus are not allowed, cafeteria spaces have been adjusted to social distancing requirements, four additional temporary cafeteria spaces have been created, and cleaning protocols have been enhanced, among many other mitigation efforts.
- Fairfield modified our student handbook to include severe sanctions for students who were found responsible for violations related to Covid-19.
- To maximize the time and opportunity for engaged learning in the classroom and to reduce potential travel, Fairfield did not have a fall semester break over Columbus Day weekend. After Thanksgiving, students have the option of staying home to complete their semester virtually.
- A combination of random testing, health monitoring, contact tracing, and isolation and quarantine protocols have helped to sustain our campus operations, as well as our teaching and learning community. **Fairfield has more than 20 employees and DNP students recently certified in contact tracing by Johns Hopkins and the State of CT.**
- As part of a re-opening strategy, it is critical to act swiftly when pockets of positive Covid-19 cases are found. **Despite zero Covid-19 cases at the start of the semester, over the first six weeks Fairfield experienced a steady but limited number of Covid-19 cases; and at the beginning of October, Fairfield saw a significant downward trend in Covid-19 cases among our student population.**
- Toward the end of the first week of October, Fairfield experienced an increase in positive Covid-19 cases within specific populations of the Fairfield University student community. While overall campus positivity rates remained low, aggressive mitigation strategies were warranted to manage the outbreaks in these identified populations, and to limit further infection.

- With this targeted approach in mind, and in consultation with the Town of Fairfield Health Department and the State of CT's Department of Public Health, NCAA and club sports were paused and their associated facilities closed, and the entire off-campus population was put into quarantine. Additionally, one residence hall had already been put under quarantine. Per the State policy, this meant that students could not leave their off-campus residences except for essentials. These quarantine measures are the same measures put into place for any resident in the Town of Fairfield.
- The CDC, the U.S. Covid-19 task force, and the Governor's Covid-19 task force have strongly encouraged universities to keep their positive and quarantined students local, which will keep Covid-19 from spreading further.
- To monitor this quarantine mitigation strategy, additional University resources were deployed to the beach, and in partnership with the Town of Fairfield Police Department, the University hired and paid for additional police resources. Check-ins with students were conducted daily, the University provided services for students who might need essentials delivered, and many friends of those who were in quarantine offered to deliver meals and goods to the doorsteps of their peers.
- The University set up a drive-through testing location off-campus and tested these targeted populations on Day 5 and Day 12 of their quarantine, as an additional protocol. Students will not be permitted to exit quarantine without producing a negative test.
- **Please reference today's dashboard located at [Fairfield.edu/reopen](https://fairfield.edu/reopen) which shows a downward trend in positive cases as a result of our mitigation efforts.**

This has not been an easy time for anyone in our community, but together we will prevail. Thank you for your continued partnership and trust as we move forward to keep our community safe, and to educate our young men and women.

As always, members of the town who have Covid-related questions should reach out to the Fairfield Public Health Department. Those with questions related to Fairfield University may contact my office.

Best Regards,



Jennifer Anderson, '97, MBA '02
Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Community Liaison
Fairfield University

Email: janderson@fairfield.edu