



A Message from University of Kentucky
PRESIDENT ELI CAPILOUTO

Dear Campus Community,

As I communicated with you yesterday, we must be willing, at each step of our fall restart, to examine our data unflinchingly and take the necessary steps to protect our community. That's what we're doing today.

We're beginning Phase II of our institution's testing and retesting plan. This phase consists of several components; the most significant are:

- **Starting this Sunday, every student involved in UK Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) – about 5,500 students – will be retested for COVID-19.** The process will take about a week. [You can read more about that process here.](#)
- **Once this testing is complete, we will move forward with additional testing of campus populations that may have higher exposure to the virus, as dictated by our ongoing data analysis.**

Let me be clear: this is not an act to blame the students who reside in these facilities or who belong to these organizations. We believe a number of factors associated with communal living spaces likely contributed to the high positivity rates in these residences. It is important to move quickly to keep students safe and to mitigate potential spread of the virus.

We are able to move with speed and precision because of our preparation and planning. We began the semester with a plan to gather the necessary data to inform our interventions—by mandating testing for all students as they arrived on campus.

That testing regimen – recommended in our restart playbook and by a team of health professionals and public health experts– created a baseline of data that's now enabling us to quickly detect and respond to trends.

Retesting has always been a part of our restart plan. We will begin that process with the students for whom the data indicate retesting is most appropriate. Two particularly challenging statistics are prompting us to act now:

- We have now tested more than 21,000 students, and our overall positivity rate is approximately 1 percent. However, students in FSL have a positivity rate of approximately 3 percent. Notably, this is still well below the positivity rate of the state and region.

- Further, of the 49 students in isolation on our campus, 30 of them are currently living in two FSL houses. We will continue to isolate these students in these houses and provide them with the necessary support.

The percentages and higher rates of positivity among this cohort of students warrant this move now.

We believe FSL houses have some challenges around communal living space and arrangements that may make it more difficult to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. We want to examine the numbers even further to determine next steps.

Now that we've nearly completed the initial mandatory student testing, we also will add more data to our coronavirus dashboard to reflect, for example, numbers of students in isolation and numbers regarding students tested off campus. We have seen a lag in those numbers in much the same way that total state numbers and individual county numbers do not always match. Different data points from different sources are reported at different times; it is simply taking some time to gather and reconcile that volume of information.

Finally, I want to emphasize to our community that the underlying factors we use to monitor the health and well-being of our campus and operational status have not changed. They will – and they should – continue to guide what we do and when we do it. They include:

- Supply of PPE.
- The number of critical care beds in UK HealthCare to serve both campus and community.
- Positivity rates.
- The capacity for daily screening and ongoing contact tracing.
- The capacity for isolation and quarantining.
- The ability to provide residential experience on our campus.
- Guidance from local, state and federal health and public policy officials.

We remain in a good place on each of those measures, although it is critical that we undertake retesting now, as our restart playbook outlines. As we move forward with this process, we will report these numbers along with our continued plans for how we will keep our campus community healthy and safe.

Thank you for your continued commitment to those we serve during anxious and unsettling times. We are a community. And, as a community, we will maintain our focus on the mission that has defined who we are and what we do.

Eli Capilouto