



*Update from the Vice Provost for Student Affairs*

# LEADING IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

January 27, 2021

## Dear Students, Families, and Faculty and Gonzaga Colleagues,

The spring semester at Gonzaga University is here and we are excited to have our students back on campus. We missed you! Thank you for working with us to ensure the return to campus and the opening of the Spring Semester was as safe as we could make it. Minimizing contact with others and getting a COVID-19 test prior to your return made a big difference, so again, thank you.

Approximately 200 new students, including 16 who started this spring, participated in health screening and orientation programming on Saturday, January 16. In the evening, Residence Life staff conducted hall meetings and provided social programming for the 130 students new to the residence halls to meet with other students in their residential communities. On Sunday, January 17, new transfer students participated in an orientation program as well. New student sessions were conducted in small groups and included a welcome from University leaders, a panel of current students sharing advice about navigating campus life and classes during COVID-19, and a campus tour. On Sunday evening, a Spike Nights event with board games was offered in-person and virtually to all students.

Returning on campus students moved back into their halls January 17-19, and nearly 1,900 on-campus residents participated in our health screening process throughout the move-in weekend. I am grateful to the many Student Affairs staff and campus volunteers who contributed to a successful move-in and opening. In the first week, we were able to screen approximately 93% of on campus students. If a student was unable to be screened, they should expect to be contacted for surveillance testing during the week of January 25.

In this newsletter, there is information about COVID vaccinations, our Spring approach to testing, and information about Isolation/Quarantine – including the most recent week's numbers. Towards the end, we also have included some information about Outdoor Recreation opportunities.

Just as a reminder, our [Spring Return to Campus guides](#) are updated and available, providing a comprehensive review of our guidelines as we begin the new semester. Thanks to your cooperation, and the hard work of our dedicated staff and faculty, we had a good Fall 2020 semester, despite all the challenges of this pandemic. If we work together again this spring, we will get through this together.

Zag Up and Zag On,

Dr. Kent Porterfield,  
Vice Provost for Student Affairs



## Vaccinations

Last week, Washington State's Department of Health issued this [phased plan/timeline](#) for vaccine distribution. Our state is currently in Phase 1B, Tier 1 of vaccine distribution. In visiting [DOH's](#) web site, a series of questions in the Phase Finder can help each of us identify where we fit within the vaccination plan. Because the parameters are specific to living/working arrangements and personal health conditions (among other factors), members of our campus community will fall into many categories of priority. We encourage everyone to conduct this self-assessment, answer questions honestly, and take advantage of vaccination availability as soon as possible. In addition, community members are encouraged to contact their own health care provider to discuss vaccination eligibility and timing.

The Spokane Regional Health District recommends that employees and students who qualify per the phased plan participate in the [Spokane Arena mass vaccination clinic](#), anticipated to open Wednesday, January 27. Vaccinations will be by appointment and delivered only to those who qualify under the current phase of Washington State's plan.

Some of Gonzaga's front-line employees serving in areas such as Health and Wellness Services, Housing and Residential Life, Campus Security and Public Safety, and Plant Services qualified to receive the vaccine within the first phase of the plan, and some have already been vaccinated. Students and faculty who are present in health care settings (internships, practicums) may also be eligible, and some have received vaccines.

Currently, colleges and universities are not named specifically in Washington's vaccination plan. President McCulloh has reached out to Governor Inslee as well as other state health leaders requesting that universities be included in Phase 1B, Tier 2 along with other congregate settings (such as K-12 schools) given the virtually identical dynamics and risk factors present on our campus.

Gonzaga is currently considering submitting a proposal to become a community vaccination center. If considered viable and acceptable, this would allow us to live out an expression of our support for the greater community of which we are a part.

As we learn more, more information will be provided via this newsletter, Morning Mail, and the [ZagOn website](#).

## Student Expectations and Standards: Our COVID-19 Approach

You may have read or heard about new, and evidently more virulent, strains of the novel coronavirus that initially appeared in the U.K., Brazil and South Africa but are now spreading worldwide. Scientists are concerned that at least some of these new strains may present new challenges. We must meet this reality head-on by redoubling our efforts to protect ourselves and each other from infection. Students have a crucial role in supporting Gonzaga's policies and prevention efforts, as well as expectations mandated by local, state, and federal agencies. To meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must remain vigilant during the 2021 Spring Semester. Our vigilance to date – with students often leading the way – has enabled us to remain open and successfully manage public health within our campus community. To promote your success, we are providing a [fact sheet](#) with resources about social gathering guidelines, guest policy expectations, and other student conduct-related topics.



## Guests and Visitors

As a reminder, we have specific guidelines for guests and visitors in University owned, operated, or leased facilities. As Spokane citizens, students residing off campus are expected to follow state and local guidelines related to gatherings. This [fact sheet](#) contains links to state and local expectations.

All students are encouraged to review expectations frequently as state, local, and University policies continue to change and evolve over time. By staying informed, demonstrating courage, and responding with conviction, we will overcome this together. Thank you for your cooperation and commitment. It has made all the difference.

## GU's COVID-19 Testing Approach

Gonzaga continues to use broad testing strategies as an effective tool to respond to the COVID-19 virus in our University community. We are working very closely, as we did last semester, with public health officials at Spokane Regional Health District, meeting weekly to assess testing protocols and new testing platforms as they become available.

During the Winter break, limited rapid-test antigen and PCR testing were offered to our student-athletes following the direction of NCAA and West Coast Conference protocols.

For the next three weeks, beginning January 25, we are implementing an aggressive surveillance testing plan with a random sampling 20% of student populations on and off campus. Surveillance testing is absolutely critical to our success at Gonzaga. In order to make it easier for students to comply and participate in it, we have moved the site to a more centralized location on campus and extended the hours and days to better conform with students' schedules. Unless otherwise notified, testing will be offered on the lower level of Welch Hall from 10am – 4pm, Monday through Thursday. We plan to continue this level of surveillance testing for at least three weeks, before assessing and determining if changes in testing plans are needed. We will be utilizing both antigen and PCR tests.

### ***Reminder: If You Are Experiencing Symptoms of COVID-19 or Have Been Potentially Exposed***

If a student is experiencing symptoms or believes they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should complete the daily report in the ZagCheck app indicating their symptoms or exposure, and/or call the COVID-19 Hotline at (509) 313-7070 to speak with a contact tracer. Students with signs, symptoms or exposures will be tested by appointment with Health and Counseling Services. Walk-in (on-demand) testing has been suspended for the first three weeks of the semester to allow us to focus on surveillance testing. Data we collect and analyze from surveillance testing will aid us in predicting and monitoring potential virus outbreaks. During this time, we will also be evaluating the need for a walk-in testing clinic by monitoring patterns, trends and community input. Population-specific testing will continue this semester for students in Law and Nursing (clinical rotations), as well as for student-athletes.



## Isolation and Quarantine - Housing & Support

Updates to testing schedules and plans, as well as aggregate testing data, are updated frequently and can be found on our ZagOn website ([www.gonzaga.edu/zagon](http://www.gonzaga.edu/zagon)).

### **Isolation and Quarantine - Housing & Support**

Consistent with [Spokane Regional Health District](#) and [CDC](#) guidelines, students will need to isolate for 10 days following a positive COVID-19 test or if presenting COVID-19 related symptoms. The period of isolation is a full 10 days following the onset of symptoms, and a student must be fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and have improving symptoms before being released from isolation.

If a student is exposed to someone who has a laboratory confirmed positive COVID-19 test, they will be expected to quarantine for a full 10 days following their last exposure to a confirmed positive individual. Students will be asked to test at the beginning of their quarantine period and again after 7 days.

Isolation and quarantine housing is designated for on-campus students, with off-campus students quarantining or isolating at their place of residence. In some circumstances, off-campus students may need to isolate or quarantine in Gonzaga University owned or leased facilities, and our contract tracers will assist them with making this determination. If a student is isolating or quarantining at their off-campus residence, contact tracers can assist them by providing information about meal or grocery delivery services. Other isolation and quarantine support may also be available to off-campus students.

A contract tracer will contact a student if there is a need for the student to relocate to an isolation or quarantine space. Meal, mail, and laundry services are available and special activities are available for students in isolation and quarantine housing. A dedicated Isolation and Quarantine Coordinator is available to assist students with essential items such as medications, legal documents, or academic supplies, and can also assist a student in accessing academic support services if needed. Care packages for isolation and quarantine residents can be sent in care of Housing and Residence Life, 502 E. Boone Ave. Spokane, WA 99258-2515 for personal delivery.

Students designated to move to isolation or quarantine housing will be given some time to pack and will receive specific instructions from Housing & Residence Life. Assistance will also be provided with transport to and from isolation and quarantine housing. When a student arrives at their assigned isolation or quarantine space, they will receive a room key and pick up their personal belongings. [Zag Dining](#) will connect with students to arrange your meals, and to see if they have any specific dietary restrictions. A welcome care package, as well as an isolation or quarantine information flier with QR codes to scan using with a smartphone, will be placed in all isolation and quarantine rooms. This QR code will give the student access to an online [Student Isolation Guide](#) or [Student Quarantine Guide](#) (myGU login required) with all the resources needed during their stay in isolation or quarantine. The style of the rooms vary based on the facility in which a students is placed, but the rooms should have provisions for food storage.



## Isolation and Quarantine Numbers - January 18-24

### **On Campus Students:**

#### **Quarantine**

- Nine (9) students moved to quarantine residences
- Eight (8) students directed to quarantine-in-place
- Three (3) students released from quarantine
- Zero (0) students released from quarantine-in-place status

#### **Isolation**

- Five (5) students with positive test results moved to isolation residence
- Three (3) students released after completing full isolation period
- Two (2) symptomatic students released from isolation (tested negative)

### **Off Campus Students:**

#### **Quarantine**

- 52 students

#### **Isolation**

- 21 students with positive test results
- 4 symptomatic students, awaiting test results

For additional information, including updates on testing and the number of COVID-19 positive cases, visit our website [www.gonzaga.edu/zagon](http://www.gonzaga.edu/zagon). Cumulative and active positive cases are updated at 5pm Monday-Friday on our COVID-19 Dashboard, and PCR testing data is updated on a weekly basis each Monday. If you have questions, please call our COVID-19 hotline at (509) 313-7070.



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## Outdoor Programs

The Rudolf Fitness Center staff is offering a variety of intramural sport options this spring that are allowable within the state and local COVID-19 rules and considered to be in the lower-risk category, including table tennis, esports, badminton, tennis, pickle Ball, and spike ball. Fitness classes may include Spin, Core & Strength, Circuit Training, HIIT, BARRE, Yoga, and Jazzercise. Fitness options are also offered by video through YouTube and Instagram.

Students may receive information about sports clubs at the Club Fair on January 29th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. More information is available at <https://gonzaga.campuslabs.com/engage/>.

Gonzaga Outdoors has trips planned every weekend throughout the semester, including snowshoeing, climbing, hiking skiing, and ice skating (<https://gonzagaoutdoors.gonzaga.edu/>).

Gonzaga is also blessed to have considerable outdoor space on campus that students can use to toss a ball or frisbee, or engage in other activities. We welcome student ideas and requests for campus outdoor activities, and we will do our best to accommodate within available resources and in congruence within state and local COVID-19 mandates and guidelines.