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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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October 27, 2020

Dear UNE Community,

I am pleased to report that after testing all residents of Featherman Hall twice (with the exception of those who chose to return home), we have had no additional positive cases of COVID-19. As a result, we are releasing residents of that dormitory from quarantine.

We received four inconclusive test results for Featherman residents. Those students are being relocated to quarantine housing and will be re-tested today. The five students who tested positive were all close contacts of the original index cases, and they will remain in isolation housing or have chosen to return home. A number of students identified as close contacts of positive cases are in quarantine housing and will remain there until released by the Maine CDC. Those Featherman residents who did choose to leave campus to quarantine elsewhere will be required to submit proof of a negative test before being allowed back on campus.

Our case-reporting dashboard also shows one Biddeford employee case of COVID-19. It should be noted that this employee has not been on campus for over a week, and the case is not related to the student cases.

As we look ahead to the last few weeks of in-person classes this semester, allow me to say a few words about our contact tracing protocols so that the community has a shared understanding of that process.

- We have 12 contact tracers that include members of our faculty and professional staff.
- They were trained through a Johns Hopkins contact tracing certification program that covers the history of SARS-CoV2 and the science around the virus and its infectious period. The training details the steps of the case investigation process as well as the ethical considerations around contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine.
- UNE's contact tracers, in an effort to ensure a timely response, are engaged the same day the University learns of a positive case.
- UNE's contact tracers will contact anyone who has been identified as a close contact per the most recent CDC guidelines. When our contact tracers reach out to students who test positive, they explain what constitutes a close contact and then walk the students through the previous days to help them identify those people who would be considered a contact.

- Maine CDC's contact tracers conduct their own investigation in addition to the University's, ensuring a two-step process that involves multiple interviews. This process allows us to cross reference the information we've collected with what has been obtained by the CDC.

I want to thank the entire University community for pulling together as we managed this situation. Professional staff in Student Life, Student Health Services, the Office of the Registrar, Facilities, and Security worked tirelessly to care for our students, shuffle class spaces, clean, and keep the campus community safe.

I also want to extend my appreciation to faculty and professional staff for continuing to serve our students despite the heightened concern that comes with any presence of the virus on our campuses. Please know that I appreciate your efforts and your commitment to the students.

Finally, I want to applaud and thank the students for their cooperation over the past few days. To the residents of Featherman, by complying with the quarantine and staying put, we were able to take the necessary steps to contain any potential spread of the virus. I know this was a sacrifice, one of many that students are making to keep one another safe this academic year, and I continue to be impressed by your positive attitudes and your resilience.

As we embark on these next few weeks with in-person learning, please continue to be vigilant in adhering to CDC guidelines and UNE's Onward Plan. As the weather gets colder, it will be tempting to gather indoors with friends who are not part of our roommate or household groups. Consider the potential consequences of those interactions carefully, and get tested if you think you have put yourself at risk. It is up to all of us to take care of ourselves and one another so that we can learn and live on our campuses as safely as possible.

Be well,

James D. Herbert  
*President*