September 23, 2020
COVID-19 Testing Update

To: Members of the University Community  
From: Ka Yee C. Lee, Provost, and Michele Rasmussen, Dean of Students in the University

After the first three days of the student move-in process into University residence halls, we write to provide an update on move-in and on our initial COVID-19 Mandatory Surveillance Testing Program results. We also want to make you aware of our plan to share updates going forward during Autumn Quarter.

Thank you to our students and their families for their compliance with the University’s protocols during move-in and for support of our testing program. We are off to a good start. We are also grateful to the many campus volunteers who assisted with a move-in like no other.

The University is committed to supporting the health and safety of our community. Since the start of the testing program Sunday morning, the University of Chicago Medicine has processed 910 tests of the 1,588 students tested as of the end of the day Tuesday. The testing results revealed two positive cases, and those students have been notified. Consistent with health and safety protocols for the residence halls, students in housing who test positive are relocated to University isolation housing and are being supported by UChicago Student Wellness and Housing and Residence Life staff, among others. Students in University isolation housing will be required to remain there until at least 10 days have passed from either their positive test result or the onset of any COVID-19-related symptoms. We have posted information on isolation procedures and student resources on the UChicago Forward website.

Our University Contact Tracing team is engaged. In accordance with our protocols, the team has tracked if the students who tested positive have been in close contact with other members of the University community and communicated with any close contacts as needed.

The University anticipated and was prepared for some students to test positive upon arrival, which is why everyone living in the University residence halls and student-athletes who live
off-campus are required to be tested when they arrive on campus and to stay at home or quarantine for at least 10 days, with weekly mandatory testing after that.

We will share the results of the first week of the Mandatory Surveillance Testing Program next week as part of a COVID-19 Dashboard the University is launching to provide important information about the health of the University community. Using data from the University’s Mandatory Surveillance and Voluntary Surveillance Testing Programs, in addition to tests of any symptomatic individuals, the dashboard will include updates every weekday on positive cases, overall testing numbers, the campus positivity rate, and the number of close contacts of infected individuals. The dashboard will be available on the UChicago Forward website, and we will also send email updates to the campus community every Friday starting October 2 with key information from the dashboard and other updates on health and safety.

As a reminder, the University’s Voluntary Surveillance Testing Program, which includes students living off-campus, faculty, other academic appointees, postdoctoral researchers, and staff who will regularly be on campus, will begin on Monday, September 28. Everyone who applied by the initial September 12 deadline has been accepted as a participant in the Voluntary Surveillance Testing Program, and those individuals will receive information soon about their testing location, day, and time. To enroll people who did not register for the program during its initial sign-up period and would like to do so, the University plans to re-open the Voluntary Surveillance Testing Program later in the quarter.

The University, in coordination with the University of Chicago Medicine, is prepared for additional positive cases and has established plans to help minimize the spread of infection. Systematic, ongoing testing of asymptomatic individuals is designed to help the University understand the prevalence of COVID-19 among our campus community, isolate those who are positive, and trace close contacts.

More information and frequently asked questions about the University’s COVID-19 testing program are available on the UChicago Forward website.