

University of Delaware administrators refuse to inform students of COVID-19 cases on campus

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Faculty at the University of Delaware are prohibited from telling their students when a classmate has tested positive for COVID-19, according to an email sent out last Wednesday by the school administration.

The email, which was obtained by the *Washington Post*, explicitly states, “[I]f an instructor is notified by a student that the student has covid-19, the instructor may not tell the class that someone has tested positive for covid-19.” The university said that professors should instead tell their students that, “given the current incidence of covid-19 on campus, we should assume that we may have contact with individuals who are shedding covid-19, perhaps unknowingly.”

This immediately contradicted another false claim in the email which stated that, due to high vaccination rates and mask mandates, “there is low risk of catching covid-19 while in class.”

The University of Delaware has seen a sharp rise in cases since the fall semester began. There were 353 new cases among students in the week that ended September 10, including 105 cases reported last Wednesday; 136 on Thursday, and 104 on Friday. This is already higher than last semester’s peak of 324 cases in a week taken during last February. It is a dramatic increase from the 77 cases recorded the week before last.

Only in the second week of classes, the university's isolation housing for students with the virus is already filled. A university official said students who tested positive are now being asked to return to their homes to quarantine.

In a separate email, the university sought to shift blame onto the students, claiming that the spike in cases was unrelated to the hours students spend

together in lecture halls and classrooms. Rather, they claimed that “large off-campus gatherings are fueling the rise in cases.” This lie has been a trope used by other university administrations seeking to shift the blame for their criminally irresponsible reopening policies onto the students that are herded into close quarters with one another.

The school claimed that the mask mandates along with a 91 percent vaccination rate among students would prevent the spread of the deadly virus. However, spikes at universities across the country are showing this to be an obvious falsehood. Already at the beginning of September, 349 students and 15 employees at Duke University tested positive. Only eight of these individuals were unvaccinated, and the overall rate of vaccination at Duke is 98 percent for students and 92 percent for faculty.

At Stanford University, a group of Resident Assistants went on strike after the university forced 500 student workers into a single room for an all day event and later notified them that one of the group tested positive for COVID-19. The possibility of a student or faculty strike is likely not far from the minds of the administrators at Delaware. They no doubt fear that if students had an accurate picture of the outbreak on campus, they would face a wave of opposition and demands for virtual classes.

The university is also continuing with major on-campus events such as football and other spectator sports. The university claims the event is safe because attendees over 12 years of age will be required to either be vaccinated or provide a negative test result within the past 72 hours. However, the fact that the Delta variant can spread among vaccinated individuals and

among children attending with their parents means these will undoubtedly be super-spreader events.

The city of Newark, which is home to the University of Delaware, has also seen a sharp rise in cases. The seven-day average has climbed from 8.3 on September 1 to 42.1 as of September 12. With only half the population vaccinated, the influx of students will lead to a massive rise in cases this fall unless serious preventative measures are taken.

On September 3rd, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) released a statement calling on all young people to turn to the working class and take up the fight to eradicate the pandemic completely. This is the program students at the University of Delaware must adopt as their own to protect their lives and ensure their safe access to an education.



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