

Subject: Update on UWA's COVID-19 Response and Testing
Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 12:14:33 PM Central Daylight Time
From: UWA President
To: All Faculty and Staff, All Students
Attachments: image001.gif, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png, image006.png



A Message from UWA President Ken Tucker

Dear UWA Family,

As we prepare to turn the calendar to October, I continue to be encouraged by the COVID-19-related numbers on our campus. This is largely the result of our entire University community (students, faculty, and staff) taking the necessary proactive and preventative measures and following the guidance provided in the [Operational Plan for Fall Semester 2020](#). While the University's situation remains favorable, this is simply not the time to relax in what has taken us this far into the semester.

One must look no further than the COVID-19 trends in Sumter County to know that we are nowhere near the end of this pandemic. Sumter County is listed as a "very high risk" for COVID-19 [by the Alabama Department of Public Health](#), as the county's numbers of new cases and visits to health care providers for symptoms related to COVID-19 are increasing. While I believe that the safety protocols and procedures in place around campus will minimize such impact on our campus, this serves a reminder that we must continue to follow all guidance of the federal, state, and local health care officials, and that we must remain proactive even when we leave the friendly confines of campus.

I sense from my discussions with various members of the University community that there is a collective "exhaustion" with COVID-19 and the related health and safety measures. Although many have understandably grown weary of what is being asked of us, as a nation and as a university, the measures that we have in place on our campus are working, and if we can continue to adhere to them, I am optimistic that we will continue to have a productive semester, albeit one that is unique.

- Currently, there are 5 students and 1 employee (roughly 0.40% of the student population and 0.34% of total on-campus population) with reported positive cases of COVID-19. This total includes GuideSafe™ Sentinel Testing for last week (week ending September 25). Last week, 40 sentinel tests were performed (29 students and 11 faculty/staff) with no positive cases of COVID-19. *Thus far, a total of 167 Sentinel Tests have been performed with only one positive test result.*
- 20 students and 14 employees of the University are in quarantine (approximately 1.9% of the University community) due to experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms or from potential exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The vast majority of those quarantined continue to be a result of a lack of social distancing.

At the risk of being redundant, I urge the University community to continue to do what is asked of us in our fight with COVID-19. There will be sacrifices that we must make for the greater good of all involved. For that, I am sorry—we all are experiencing these. However, we must remain diligent in our actions, and I am convinced that we will come out of this stronger than ever.

Take care and be safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Tucker, Ph.D.

President

The University of West Alabama

phone: 205-652-3527

address: UWA Station 1

web: <http://www.uwa.edu/>

[Download the Operational Plan for Fall Semester 2020](#)

The University of West Alabama | uwa.edu

