Dear faculty,

I hope you enjoyed the long weekend. As of this morning, UND has moved from 330 to 61 active COVID-19 cases and greatly reduced the number of students required to isolate or quarantine in hotels. This a positive sign and we ask all staff, faculty and students to continue prevention practices to avoid future spikes. There is a testing event today from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or until test supply is exhausted at the UND High Performance Center. It’s open to all UND students, faculty, and staff, as well as the general public.

At University Senate, a member asked for assistance on what they can and should communicate to students in class regarding COVID-19. As you know, when someone in your class has either tested positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact, the faculty member may get a courtesy notification from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (if the student requests this) or the student may reach out directly to request the ability to continue to engage in your course remotely, which we hope you will accommodate. Faculty members may also be asked about physical distancing practices in their classrooms as part of the contact tracing protocol.

Because other students may be wondering about the positive or close contact status of their classmates, we have provided a message you can post to Blackboard for your students in the physical classroom. We know you are putting intensive effort into Hybrid/HyFlex teaching right now, so we wanted to create a message that everyone could use (rather than expecting every instructor to write their own Blackboard message).

The North Dakota (N.D.) Department of Health has provided information for those who may have been exposed but are not identified as a close contact. A factsheet titled “Fact Sheet for People Exposed but Not CC” is posted on the VPAA website that you can also share with your students. Please use the message below along with the fact sheet. We hope this will help to clarify the situation for students, alert everyone to their options, and reduce the questions you are fielding.

**Note that you should include details on any changes to course delivery along with this message if that applies to you** (e.g., teaching remote if you follow the N.D. Department of Health’s recommendation to “when possible, work from home” for the two-week monitoring period). Please reach out to your department chair and/or dean if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks much,

Debbie Storr
Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
DRAFT MESSAGE FACULTY CAN USE FOR STUDENTS:

Students,

You may be wondering how you will know if someone in class has either tested positive or has been identified as a close contact. Because of health privacy laws, the N.D. Department of Health cannot tell us who tested positive or who has been determined to be a close contact (or where they were sitting in the classroom). However, if you were considered a close contact, you would have been contacted by the N.D. Department of Health as part of their contact tracing protocol. If you were not identified as a close contact, you are at lower risk for COVID-19 infection, but should still be aware of the signs and symptoms.

COVID-19 is a contagious disease that mainly spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever and cough. Some individuals may also experience shortness of breath, runny nose, fatigue, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, loss of taste/smell or gastrointestinal symptoms. Symptoms can vary by person and range from very mild symptoms to severe illness. While the elderly and individuals with serious chronic medical conditions appear to be at the greatest risk, young people have also experienced severe medical complications from the disease.

Persons identified as close contacts to the individual with COVID-19 have been advised by the N.D. Department of Health to stay home for the next two weeks and to quarantine. Even if you were not identified as a close contact, you should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19. If you currently have symptoms or develop symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your healthcare provider or UND Student Health Services by phone (701.777.4500) and they may evaluate you for COVID-19.

Please consider the following N.D. Department of Health recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- maintain six-foot physical distancing from others;
- wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw it away;
- wear a cloth face covering in spaces where you may interact with others;
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces/objects regularly;
- get plenty of rest, drink fluids, and eat healthy foods;
- avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- and stay home when you are sick.

Frequently Asked Questions:

“Can you tell me who tested positive for COVID-19 so I know how close I was to this person?”

Because of health privacy laws, the N.D. Department of Health cannot tell us who tested positive or where they were sitting in the classroom. The N.D. Department of Health has contacted your instructor to ask about the distance between seats in the classroom and students’ use of face coverings. Contact tracers use this information and seating protocol to determine if there were
“close contacts” (defined as being less than six feet for at least 15 minutes from the individual who tested positive for COVID-19).

The N.D. Department of Health will advise close contacts to quarantine for two weeks. If the N.D. Department of Health does not contact you, they have determined you were not a close contact of any student in your class who tested positive.

“What should I do with this information?”

You can use the information to follow recommendations to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We encourage you to remain diligent about wearing face-coverings whenever you are around others, even close friends. We know that many cases of transmission occur between individuals who know each other, and that someone without symptoms can infect another person by simply sharing the same air. We encourage you to maintain this diligence outside of the classroom as well and avoid large gatherings.

Transmission risk is higher in enclosed spaces, but transmission can also occur while walking together outside. Wearing your face-covering, maintaining physical distance, washing your hands, and avoiding large gatherings will help us keep our campus open.

“Who should I contact if I have questions?”

If you have questions about remote learning in this course, please contact your instructor. If you have health-related questions, we recommend reviewing the attached materials and the N.D. Department of Health’s website. If you have other academic questions, please contact your advisor. If you have other concerns about campus life, please contact the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (UND.osrr@UND.edu or 701.777.2664).