

Resolution 020
A Resolution to Ensure Student Access to COVID Tests and Track
Vaccinations

Sponsored by: Senator Sijgers

Co-Sponsored by: Senator Birth, Senator Bracey, Senator Farrell, Senator
Lucardi, Senator Marsden

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America is one of many institutions working to continue its services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whereas,

Testing and Vaccinating are two of the most important tools for the University's effort to both monitor and diminish the spread of COVID-19 and therefore maintain in-person services on our campus.

Whereas,

While the University provides testing for students experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, as well as regular testing for student-athletes and members of other specified student organizations, a significant portion of the student population, especially off-campus students, do not fall into the aforementioned categories and as a result, are unable or have extreme difficulty accessing on-campus tests.

Whereas,

Many students are confused about who to contact to discuss COVID exposures and the need for testing after exposures, and continued and clarified communication on the topic would assist students in understanding these systems as they change.¹

Whereas,

Other Universities in the DC area provide tests to their students weekly and by request in order to track COVID spread most efficiently and reassure students who are concerned about the virus spreading through known exposures or asymptomatic carriers.²

Whereas,

The University has implemented a new system for surveillance testing known as Shield T3 COVID testing system in order to more effectively surveillance test the student population.

¹ <https://student-affairs.catholic.edu/opening-2020.html#testing>

² <https://www.georgetown.edu/coronavirus/georgetown-university-covid-19-testing-protocol/>;
<https://www.american.edu/ocl/healthcenter/covid-19-help-information.cfm#test2>;
<https://coronavirus.gwu.edu/testing-tracing>;
<https://home.howard.edu/pandemic-response/testing-and-protocol>

Whereas,

Students are confused about who is involved in this testing strategy, if this will increase the number of tests available to students, and which University department is in charge of administering these tests.

Whereas,

Increased communication and clarification on the implementation of this system would reassure students who are nervous about the virus spreading in our campus community undetected.³

Whereas,

The nature of the virus is such that it is unpredictable, and by focusing University efforts on only symptomatic or close exposures, the University exposes itself to a weakness in its testing statistics. This weakness could be avoided with a visible testing strategy which allows more students to be administered tests.⁴

Whereas,

Continuous confusion regarding eligibility status as well as the University's overall testing strategies has led some students to leave campus to be tested rather than obtain a test at Catholic University, despite the University's articulated position on the nature of tests conducted independently from the school itself which states "The nature, quality, and reliability of testing conducted independent of the University can vary widely, with different chances for false positives."⁵

Whereas,

If the University is worried about the accuracy of some tests taken off-campus, then it should help students to know which testing centers have more reliable tests.

Whereas,

Many Catholic University students, faculty, and staff members have begun receiving the vaccine.

Whereas,

The University should begin recording who has received the vaccine to help gather statistics for its fall reopening plan, Commencement, and future University organizing.

Whereas,

³ <https://student-affairs.catholic.edu/opening-2020.html#testing>

⁴ <https://communications.catholic.edu/coronavirus/testing/index.html>

⁵ <https://student-affairs.catholic.edu/opening-2020.html#testing>

The University has clearly published and advertised the statistics it has collected from testing students from COVID-19 which has been very encouraging for the University community.

Whereas,

The University should do the same with the information it has collected about community vaccinations in order to promote this same transparency, peace of mind, and the importance of receiving the vaccine.

Whereas,

The University should update the section of the “Spring 2021 Student Life FAQ” to reflect any sort of information collection portals it has in place around vaccines and include these updates in the weekly COVID-Updates emails and other University communication mechanisms.

Be it enacted that,

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby requests that:

1. The University creates a testing strategy that more frequently tests all students attending in-person classes or residing on campus.
2. The University adjusts their testing communications and prerequisites to ensure equal, fair, and convenient access to testing on our campus for all students both on-campus and off-campus.
3. The University publishes testing locations which it deems acceptable for students who choose to be tested off campus.
4. The University tracks the number of students who have received or in the process of receiving the vaccine and clearly publishes and advertises the avenues students have to submit their proof of vaccination.
5. The University publishes, in accordance with FERPA protections, the number of students, staff, and faculty that have received the vaccine.

Agreed to by a vote of _____ yeas to _____ nays on this date: _____ with _____ abstaining and _____ not present.

Gerald Sharpe

President of the Student Government Association

Gemma del Carmen

Vice President of the Student Government Association