

Dear Stevenson Students,

Today we officially start the Fall 2020 semester. While my fervent hope was to begin the semester with in-person instruction, I am grateful for the opportunity we have for our students to come together virtually with faculty and staff for teaching, learning, discussion, and intellectual growth. With these efforts, our entire community remains focused on helping our students achieve their personal, professional, and academic goals.

Here, I wish to update you on the status of our COVID-19 testing results and describe our plans for the next several weeks.

Campus COVID-19 Testing

We have tested an additional 465 students for Coronavirus on August 25, 26 and 27. One student tested positive and 464 students tested negative for a positivity rate significantly below 1%. Across all 7 days of testing, 52 students tested positive and 789 students tested negative for a positivity rate of 6.2%. While our overall positivity rate is higher than our region's current rate, the results from the last three days demonstrate that we can make progress in preventing and limiting COVID-19 transmission. Two of the students are isolating in on-campus facilities separate from other students, while the remainder are isolating at home. Close contacts have been identified through contact tracing and are quarantining. All are conducting daily monitoring of their symptoms, and the Wellness Center is following up on their welfare. The students will continue to isolate and quarantine until they have completed our 14-day protocol. In addition, the Wellness Center is responding to students currently on campus who identify possible symptoms of COVID-19 through daily symptom checking and who require follow-up testing, isolation, or quarantine.

We continue to work with the Baltimore County Department of Health to understand and analyze the sources and causes of the 44 positive results reported from our August 24 testing session. The Department of Health has confirmed that the positive tests resulted from interactions that occurred before students moved into campus housing.

Controlling COVID-19 Transmission

While there are many uncertainties associated with the novel Coronavirus, we know many things for certain at this point. There are three BASIC FACTS that are absolutely critical to Keep Stevenson Safe.

- WEAR FACE COVERINGS PROPERLY, COVERING YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE, AND STAY 6 FEET AWAY FROM OTHERS AT ALL TIMES. MEASURE OUT 6 FEET SO YOU KNOW HOW FAR IT IS.
- DO NOT GATHER IN LARGE GROUPS.
- UNDERSTAND THAT YOU CAN STILL BE INFECTED AND TRANSMIT THE VIRUS EVEN IF YOU HAVE HAD A NEGATIVE TEST RESULT—TOUGH, BUT TRUE.

Students who are currently on campus and students who wish to join us on campus must do these three things if we wish to open our campus this fall. Visit our [Keep Stevenson Safe web page](#) to watch short videos about the health and hygiene measures you should be practicing, and sign our [Stevenson Social Compact](#) as a way to remind yourself and others how important it is that we all practice these health and hygiene measures.

Returning to Campus

Stevenson is working with the Baltimore County Department of Health to create a plan for the safe return of students to our residence halls. This plan will be implemented over a longer period of time

than traditional move-in, and it will involve some revisions to our testing approaches. We will need to provide continuing evidence that we have controlled the spread of infection on campus to successfully pursue this plan. We will be in touch regarding the details of this plan in the next week.

Adapt and Thrive

The COVID-19 pandemic is an enormous challenge for our entire society. Resilience, flexibility, resolve, and determination are all needed as we confront an unpredictable and dangerous enemy.

We understand that the critical actions highlighted above mean that our lives must change in profound ways and that this is extremely frustrating at first. None of us asked for the COVID-19 pandemic and none of us caused it, but we must all work together---changing, adapting—to get through it.

Let's adapt and thrive. I know our entire university community—our students, their families, faculty, staff, and alumni—love Stevenson and want us to succeed for the sake of our students today and generations to come. We can if we all commit to doing the things that protect ourselves and others.

Thank you for all of your efforts to Keep Stevenson Safe.

Sincerely,

Elliot Hirshman
President