

**Subject:** Recent off-campus events

**Date:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 10:08:07 AM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** SRU Communication

**To:** SRU Stakeholder

Aug. 27, 2020

Dear Students:

The University has recently become aware of multiple off-campus gatherings, attended by, from all appearances, hundreds of people. These events were brought to SRU's attention through photos and videos circulated on social media. In these images, we have observed SRU students gathered in large crowds without face masks and often standing closer than 6 feet from one another. While these gatherings did occur at off-campus locations, their impact will likely be felt by all individuals within our campus community.

As of Aug. 27, three students have already been diagnosed with COVID-19. While that number may *seem* small, it has the potential to grow exponentially based on the lack of adherence to public health guidance such as the mass gatherings that occurred the past two weekends in our community.

Research shows that COVID-19 is often spread by individuals who are asymptomatic – those who show no symptoms – or who have mild symptoms but believe that the symptoms are unrelated to the virus. Therefore, the individual impact is often much greater than it can be directly observed or felt. All it takes is one asymptomatic individual attending a single large gathering to unleash a widespread outbreak of the virus on our campus. [This video from the CDC illustrates how quickly COVID-19 can spread from seemingly harmless interactions.](#)

To prevent the rapid spread of COVID-19, SRU requires everyone to wear a mask or face covering, while reminding all to continue practicing proper social distancing, hand-washing hygiene and adherence to all other important public health guidance. [More information is available on the CDC website.](#)

Additionally, the following best practices are recommended by SRU's Student Health Services:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face covering.
- Always maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other people.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid large gatherings and crowds.
- Never share beverages, food, cups, plates or utensils with others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Monitor your health, including temperature, and be alert for flu-like symptoms.
- Stay home if you develop a fever, cough or other symptoms; if you've had exposure to someone who is sick; or are waiting for test results. Leave only to seek medical care, if needed.

If these off-campus gatherings continue and result in a dramatic rise in the transmission of COVID-19, the University may be forced to return to an all-virtual format and send all students currently residing on-campus back home. Additionally, a large increase in the number of positive cases could force Butler

County to regress to a “yellow” or “red” phase with new stay-at-home and business closure orders. Butler County is currently reporting 757 positive cases of COVID-19.

As a community, our safety is a shared responsibility and we need everyone’s commitment and help to make sure we remain healthy throughout this challenging time.

Sincerely,

David Wilmes  
Chief Student Affairs Officer