

## **Subject: SRU announces COVID-19 testing regimen and phased approach for spring 2021**

Dec. 18, 2020

Dear Slippery Rock University students, faculty and staff:

As the calendar winds down on 2020, and we look forward to the start of the new year, I'd like to share some important news. As part of our ongoing mitigation efforts all local students will be provided with free COVID-19 testing by SRU's Student Health Services during the spring 2021 semester.

As I have said since the onset of the pandemic, the University is committed to doing all it can to maximize the safety and well-being of all members of our community. Providing testing is part of our continued efforts to honor this commitment.

Our ability to do on-site testing is the result of a partnership with Shippensburg University which has established a centralized laboratory dedicated to processing COVID-19 testing samples. Students will be administered a saliva-based polymerase chain reaction test, also known as a PCR test, which detects the genetic material specific to the coronavirus within days of infection, even for students who show no symptoms. Results can typically be determined in fewer than three days.

Additionally, the return to campus for the spring 2021 semester will take place in phases to allow for a deliberate and measured approach that will not only help to ensure the health and safety of our University community but provide students, faculty and staff with the best possible campus experience given the ongoing pandemic. As we have from the start, we will remain flexible and adjust to any developments with the virus and to changes in county, state and federal health guidelines.

The following briefly outlines how and when each student group will participate in testing:

### **PHASE 1: Jan. 12-31, 2021**

Courses will be offered exclusively online so that the following groups can begin the testing regimen prior to resuming limited on-campus activities beginning Feb. 1:

- On-campus residents will be tested twice during their first week on campus and then bi-weekly thereafter.
- Students with in-person classes not living on-campus will be tested prior to in-person classes beginning Feb. 1 and then bi-weekly thereafter.
- Student-athletes will begin testing prior to on-campus practices and in-person meetings that begin Feb. 1 and then weekly thereafter.
- Upon the recommendation of Student Health Services, other groups with the potential for substantial close contact will be tested weekly.

**PHASE 2: Beginning Feb. 1, 2021**

- Those registered for in-person courses will begin attending as directed by the course syllabus.
- Student-athletes will begin regular practice at the direction of their coaches and athletic trainers.
- Regular biweekly screening testing regimen will begin for all students who wish to use any campus facilities.

Guidance about potential employee testing is forthcoming.

Testing is central to a prevention strategy that could allow for a traditional fall 2021 semester and is part of our University's commitment to health and safety. I am proud of how our community is facing this global challenge appreciate everyone for joining us in this continued effort, as well as protecting the well-being of our community, friends and families.

Sincerely,

William J. Behre, Ph.D.  
President