

Dear South Texas Community,

Thank you. This past week, we saw several universities and colleges (including Michigan State, UNC, and Notre Dame) forced to revert to online education because students failed to respect social distancing standards, mask expectations, and other requirements to protect the health and safety of their communities. Based on the news stories this weekend, I expect several more universities and colleges to do the same this week. Across the country, hundreds of students have been quarantined, and schools have delayed classes and are evicting students who don't comply with COVID-19 safety policies.

By contrast, you successfully navigated the first week of this unprecedented fall 2020 semester — and you did it with flexibility, diligence, and care for your fellow students and our entire South Texas community. You affirmatively adopted and effectively incorporated new safety routines into your “new normal” for the semester.

Thank you for using the ReturnSafe app, as well. The reason for the app really is quite simple. For us to open campus and to have in-person classes, we have to be able to contain community spread. That requires pre-screening and contact tracing. There is no alternative to an automated solution like the ReturnSafe app.

I know that many students (and many faculty and staff) desperately want to be on campus this fall. That is why I so appreciate that our community has successfully risen to the challenge of an unpredictable and unique semester. And, that is why **it is imperative that *all members* of the South Texas community continue to vigilantly and consistently adhere to the law school's COVID-19 policies**, posted at www.stcl.edu/health -- and the [Student COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#), in particular. Because health and safety come first, these policies will be strictly enforced.

Clarification on COVID-19 Policies

In response to some questions about our operations and policies, I'd like to provide you with clarification:

- Facial coverings must be worn in all common areas (that is, all spaces other than individual offices or individual study rooms); this includes hallways between classes.
- Facial coverings must be properly worn (that is, over the nose and mouth); please do not lower your mask to speak, even in class.
- Even while wearing a facial covering, individuals must maintain safe distancing practices -- that is, at least six feet of separation -- at all times on campus; this is true in every individual office and study room, as well.
- The sixth floor of the Library (including the inner foyer and outside terrace) is a common area — meaning that facial coverings are required and eating is prohibited.
- Directional signage must be followed in hallways and common areas.

- Individuals may smoke without facial coverings in designated areas of the sixth floor terrace, but must maintain safe distancing practices -- that is, at least six feet of separation.
- Students must adhere to maximum occupancy requirements for all Library study rooms.

Designated Eating Areas / Guidelines

We recognize that we need to identify additional spaces for designated eating areas so that we can acquire plexiglass shields and create safe places to eat. Until then, there are **three designated spaces for eating on campus**:

1. The cafeteria area near Candy Man (first floor);
2. Individual offices; and
3. Individual Library study rooms (23 study rooms are available for current students).

Eating is prohibited elsewhere on campus, except for those who have received prior approval due to medical conditions. In the designated eating areas:

- Individuals must maintain safe distancing practices -- that is, at least six feet of separation (as elsewhere on campus);
- In the cafeteria area near Candy Man, only two people are permitted per table (one on each side of the plexiglass shield); and
- Individuals are encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating.

Although eating is limited to the three locations listed above, we want to be more flexible with drinking -- because of the very brief time that facial coverings need to be removed to take a quick drink. Thus, for now, members of our community are permitted to drink in common areas -- and, again, with at least six feet of separation. For everyone's health and safety, when you remove your facial covering for a few seconds to take a drink, please replace the facial covering immediately. [The longer the facial covering is removed, the greater the risk of spreading the virus.]

If you have additional questions, please email them to health@stcl.edu.

Emergency Text Messages

At 10.39 a.m. on Saturday, Kent Brazelton sent all students an email with information on how to sign up for emergency text messages. With two tropical events in the Gulf of Mexico, **now is the time to sign up for these messages**. We will use this emergency text messaging system to keep the community apprised of any changes to our campus operations.

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Once again, thank you for your continued, steadfast concern for the health and safety of everyone in our community. We have several members of our community who are at increased risk, and it is incumbent upon all of us to protect them. By remaining personally committed and vigilant in the battle against COVID-19, we can protect the collective health of our exceptional community -- and continue to allow those who want to be on campus the opportunity to do so.

Thank you, be safe, and all the best,

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