



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

July 30, 2020

Dear Prospective Students, Parents, and Loved Ones of our Fall 2020 Rome Class,

This is a follow up to my letter to you of July 9th regarding the Fall 2020 Rome semester. The purpose of this letter is both to (a) affirm that we are on course for our previous plans and (b) articulate in greater depth how we intend to proceed ahead in a few key areas over which there has been significant internal discussion since my last communication.

Very little on the Italian side has changed since my letter of three weeks ago, and certainly nothing has changed for the worse. Italy's anti-COVID numbers are still improving despite the gradual opening up of the country about a month ago: the [downward trend](#) of active positive cases, deaths, general hospitalizations, and ICU hospitalizations has continued in recent weeks. Consequently, most experts admit that Italy is somewhere between Phase Three and back to normal, and the Italian government is itself considering phasing out the state of health emergency within the coming three months, if not sooner. All of this comes as welcome news to anyone living or intending to visit here.

Since you yourselves are living the American realities under COVID, let me pass over that question to the issue of how Italian attitudes have changed in regard to countries with high active-positive rates of COVID. A [July 9 decree from the Ministry of Health](#) banned citizens in thirteen countries from entering Italy in response to a significant number of imported infections from those countries in late June and early July. No such decrees have been issued in regard to the U.S., nor do we expect there will be in future. However, this type of news has raised alarms in Italy across the board. For this reason, we have also needed to become pro-active in giving local Italian authorities all of the assurances they need in order to be convinced that we too won't be importing infected U.S. citizens into their country come mid-September. In fact, I've had a number of important meetings in this regard since sending you the letter of three weeks ago.

Keeping the above public opinion, political climate, and regulatory background in mind, in what follows allow me to offer more specifics about the safety measures that students will find in place (and need to be followed) when they arrive on September 13th to the Rome Campus.

- **Rome Reopening Plan:** Given that the [Irving Campus Reopening Plan](#) is compatible with Rome's plans, all students are asked to read the guidelines within the Irving plan carefully. Although there may be some small differences in policy as the result of the different physical settings, a different regulatory and legal environment, and different cultural norms appropriate to each place, the guidelines you find for Irving will be implemented fully in Rome.
- **Due Santi Groundhog Pledge:** A modified version of the Irving [Groundhog Pledge](#) is under consideration for Rome, notably in regard to the statement, "Reduce potential exposure by adopting the following behaviors at least 14 days before I arrive on campus: practice social distancing (at least 6 feet apart), wash hands often or use hand sanitizer when appropriate, wear a mask and avoid touching my face." The goal of the revised pledge will be to ensure without any reasonable doubt that no one leaves the U.S. carrying an active COVID infection. To that end, we will need to ask all students to self-isolate in the 14 days leading up to their departure for Italy. Such self-isolation will need to include a

commitment to staying at home, following online classes during this period, and not interacting with people outside of the family unit.

- **Pre-Arrival COVID Testing:** We are requiring that all students take a diagnostic/viral COVID test within seven (7) days of their departure for Italy and in case of a positive result, first communicate that to the Irving Rome Office at udrome@udallas.edu, and second be prepared to take classes online (from home) rather than on ground (in Rome). Failure to obtain and report the results of this test to the Irving Rome Office within two (2) days of departure may be grounds for suspension from the on ground experience of the Program and refused admission to the Rome Campus upon arrival. In that event, students will continue to have the opportunity to finish their classes online.
- **Online Classes** (September 1 – 11): Here are some guidelines as to how online classes will work:
 - By virtue of being registered for Rome classes, students are also already integrated within the [Brightspace](#) learning platform. On that platform students will be able to access course syllabi, assignment materials, and their online gradebook.
 - Faculty will also use Brightspace and email as their direct means of communication about particular details of the course.
 - Faculty may elect to conduct live streamed or video recorded classes, and each faculty member—whether in online or live streaming mode—will take attendance for classes. In the case of live streamed classes, classes will be held at the very time at which they are scheduled for Rome, regardless of time zone differences (for example, if a class is scheduled for Rome on a Wednesday at 8:00-9:30am Rome time, it will be held on the same day at 8:00-9:30am Dallas (CDT) time). If classes are conducted as a video recorded "pick-up" please follow your instructor's directions as to how this will work.
 - Note that all primary texts, secondary texts, and images are provided for students, be it through digital copies or internet links.
- **Airport Arrivals** (Sunday, September 13): In accordance with quarantine rules, UD Rome will need to pick up all students at the airport at a given time and bring them to campus. Most students will be met by staff at the airport and come to campus by private bus, while others will need to use UD's exclusive taxi with staff help.
- **Fourteen Day Quarantine** (September 13-26): For the first fourteen days of the on ground semester, students can expect to be quarantined on the UD Rome Campus under the following conditions:
 - Students cannot leave campus nor host outside visitors to campus.
 - Students will have to sign a form consenting to living in a two person room, and only in exceptional cases will students be granted the right to be assigned a single room.
 - Students will have complete use of the campus grounds, including dorms, library, soccer field, swimming pool, tennis and basketball court.
 - Students will have access to all normal internet services for their computers and smart phones.
 - Classes, Masses and Public Assemblies will be held in the outdoors—under a multi-purpose tent.
 - Our cafeteria service will offer three meals per day as planned, and these services will be delivered either in an individually-packaged format or a buffet.
 - Students will have regular access to our Cappuccino Bar for coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks, plus we will make grocery runs for special needs.
 - UD Rome's Office of Student Life will be organizing a regular variety of activities

during quarantine period, including films, sports activities, good food and wine, and religious encounters.

- Students will need to sanitize their bathrooms on a daily basis (using disposable wipes) and register these events—not the whole bathroom, but only the surface areas such as door-knobs, faucets, toilet seats, etcetera.
- **Important! The Burden of Quarantine:** As defined by Italian law, quarantine consists of a trial period in which visitors in Italy demonstrate that they are free of the COVID virus. In our case at the UD Rome Campus, where we will be engaged in a collective, preventive quarantine (i.e. "a bubble") that trial period extends to a group of visitors demonstrating as a group that they are free of the virus. In view of these guidelines, quarantine is expected to be 14 days long but may be extended if one or more individuals test positive for COVID and will last until the time when all UD students and staff under quarantine are demonstrably free of the disease for a period of 14 days. To be clear:
 - Possibility of a Minor Extension to Quarantine Period: In choosing to come to Rome, students and parents should take note of this particular application and dynamic of Italian national quarantine rules and understand and accept the possibility that in case of an incidence of COVID on campus during the quarantine period, the quarantine will be extended beyond 14 days. For example, if a student tests positive on day three (3) of the program, he or she will be isolated and the quarantine clock is automatically reset for the entire community to seventeen (17) days, or rather $14+3=17$ days.
 - Possibility of Major Extensions to Quarantine Period: In a worse case scenario, in which multiple students bring COVID to campus and through the neglect of social distancing, handwashing, and mask wearing rules, we come to face a "red zone" outbreak, we could face a longer quarantine time. Theoretically, in the unlikely but absolute worst case scenario, that quarantine period could be extended to the entire 89 days of the Rome program.
 - Likelihood of a COVID Outbreak on Campus?: Although the above two paragraphs describe the real steps UD Rome can and must take in order to keep its residents safe and at the same time abide by Italian anti-COVID laws that are designed to keep Italians safe, it goes without saying that by diligently following all of the safety protocols outlined in this and previous letters, students and staff have all of the tools and information necessary to reduce any risk of an outbreak significantly and indeed definitively. This is the COVID hand we have been dealt, and all things considered it is a strong hand, indeed a potentially winning hand. We all should be encouraged by the opportunities before us and take them up as a challenge. Success or failure in this regard is therefore within our own power to determine and essentially a matter of choice, will, and the conscientious application of campus guidelines.
- **Isolation on Campus vs. Isolation in Hospital Concerns:** Parents and students are reminded that, should a student test positive for COVID, UD Rome will notify local health officials for help in dealing with the case. If his/her symptoms are determined to be minor, the student will reside in an isolated area on campus. If the student's symptoms are determined to be major to the point of compromising health, he/she will be moved to a local COVID hospital for recovery. The student will not be able to return to the United States unless the student is healthy enough to travel, i.e. unless the student is COVID-free.
- **Post-Quarantine Semester** (September 27 – December 10): Classes, Masses, Public Assemblies, and Cafeteria Services now return to their proper time and place at this point. In this post-quarantine phase, students will both have the run of the campus and be allowed to come and go as they wish, travel freely, and enjoy their Rome semester. The

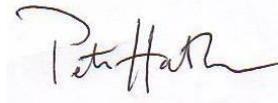
[Groundhog/Due Santi Pledge](#), however, will still be in force, including the use of masks for indoor spaces, social distancing in both the indoors and outdoors, and limitations on visitor policies.

As the beginning of the semester draws ever nearer we will be sending you yet another letter (or two) with updated calendar, obligatory forms to sign, a revised Groundhog (AKA Due Santi) Pledge to sign, and additional logistical information.

Speaking for everyone on both sides of the ocean, I want to thank you for your patience and resilience during this lengthy planning process. We are as confident of the decisions we've taken as we can be and look forward with great expectation to student arrivals in just under two months from now. The only word of caution that I must leave you with is this: the action plans outlined in this and previous letters have been made in good faith, with the very best of intentions, and with a great deal of thought and hard work by qualified professionals. What we cannot control, however, is how the individual governments of the U.S.A., Europe, and Italy will conduct their affairs in the coming weeks and months. Any abrupt change of plan will in all likelihood emerge—for better or worse—in response to the actions of such governments in their management of this massive health crisis. Our expectation is that things will only get better in the coming months and yet we are aware—as you should be too—that this outcome cannot be taken for granted.

If anything of concern comes up in the days and weeks to follow, please do write either me at phatlie@udallas.edu or Mrs. Davies at bdavies@udallas.edu at your convenience if you have questions and concerns that you think we can address.

Sincerely Yours,



Peter Hatlie, Dean, Director, VP, Prof. of Classics