



## UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

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August 7, 2020

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

This is the first of several Friday update letters to you as we count down to the beginning of online classes on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> and the the beginning of our in person semester in Rome on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

We have steered a lot of information in your direction in the past months and don't intend with these Friday updates to go over all of that information again here. Rather, these Friday updates will answer questions that have come in from students and parents during the past week, plus share any new information that comes to our attention from either the USA or Italy side of things.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### Pre-Departure Self Quarantine:

**Q:** What is required of a student who is asked to self quarantine for 14 days prior to departing for Rome?

**A:** You should stay at home and frequent only family members who are known to be free of COVID. Do not go out, except when recommended by a medical professional to seek care. Do not use public transportation. Do not permit nonessential visitors to come to your residence.

#### Pre-Departure Testing Requirement:

**Q:** How much in advance can the test be done?

**A:** Rome will follow Irving policy in requiring that a viral, diagnostic test be taken no sooner than seven (7) days prior to the student's departure from the USA. But since there is a Sunday in the mix, we will create an exception to policy here and allow the earliest date of testing to be Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### Potential Problems of Getting Test Results Back on Time:

**Q:** Some testing centers are taking a long time to get results. If the test is supposed to be done seven (7) days before students leave, they may not get results on time. What are the options?

**A:** Although we too have heard of problems in delayed reporting of results, we just cannot control that outcome and continue to insist that students need to present a negative viral diagnostic test as a requirement for admission to the Rome Program on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. I'm afraid that the burden will be on the student to find a reliable testing center, and in a worst-case scenario, they can arrange testing with the health center at the Irving campus, where they can turn around a result in a matter of hours.

#### Type of Diagnostic Test to Use:

**Q:** I've heard that there are various types of tests available—nose, throat, saliva. Which one should we do?

**A:** The throat culture is preferred but any of the above are fine. Note that either the molecular or antigen tests, [as described here](#), are adequate.

Validity of a Serological/Antibody Test:

**Q:** I was curious as to why UD Rome is recommending an antibody, serological test and not a viral diagnostic test for COVID?

**A:** We are not recommending or requiring a serological test. We are only requiring a viral diagnostic test.

Possible False Positives in Testing:

**Q:** I am particularly concerned about false positives, which could doom a student's entire semester. What's your policy on that?

**A:** Our UD Irving health experts say that false positives are a very rare occurrence. They do happen but not very often. If you are concerned about receiving a false positive, however, then either of the following two options seems sensible: (1) take the test twice within the course of the seven (7) days prior to departure, or (2) take tests in separate testing centers.

Prior COVID Infection Compromising Pre-Departure COVID Testing:

**Q:** A number of my family members tested positive for COVID earlier in the summer, and I probably got it too even though I never got tested. I've heard that some experts say that it is possible to test positive for COVID for up to three (3) months after having it, even if one is no longer contagious. I would hate to test positive for these reasons. What's your call on this issue?

**A:** This is a good question and a legitimate concern, for which we are seeking an additional medical opinion and hope to find a solution and/or work-around soon. In the meantime, we ask all students who are in this position—i.e. probably or certainly having contracted COVID-19 in recent months—to step forward and let us know of this fact as soon as possible.

Documentation Requirements for Entering Italy:

**Q:** What documentation do I need to bring with me to the airport in order to prove to both U.S. authorities and Italian authorities that I am authorized to travel to Italy for the purposes of study consistent with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [announcement](#) dated July 31, 2020?

**A:** Within the next few weeks we will be posting a number of documents to your applications for you to print out and carry with you to Rome to prove your student status on entry. In addition to the seven (7) already completed documents we will provide, there will be two (2) which require your completion:

- Affidavit of financial support which a parent must sign in the presence of a notary. These were emailed to parents in the spring as part of the visa application, but are now required for the students to carry with them. ***Do not return this to the consulate***, but keep it to carry with you! For your convenience it is attached to this email.
- A self-declaration (*autodichiarazione*) regarding COVID status, travel history, reason for entry (study) and commitment to self-isolate. This should be stapled to the top of all the other documents you will be bringing.

Naturally, you must also carry the following items with you:

- Your passport
- Your complete round-trip flight itinerary
- Your UD ID card
- Your ISIC card if it has arrived, or a printout of your ISIC card information which you will receive via email in early September

Rome Airport Arrivals:

**Q:** How will the airport arrival/transfer process be conducted?

**A:** Students arriving on a group flight, organized by UD's travel agent, will be greeted at the airport by UD staff, checked in, and transported to campus on private charter buses. Students who made

their own arrangements and arrive before the group flight, or soon thereafter, have the option to meet the UD group buses for transportation to the airport. Any student who is making his/her own arrangements, and is not able to take the group bus, must travel on private transportation booked by the Rome campus through UD's preferred private car service. This is a COVID-19 restriction imposed by the Italian government that forces the University of Dallas to monitor student arrival and transportation to our campus bubble. Students not arriving on the group flight are responsible for providing all of their flight arrival information to the Irving Rome Office and keeping the Rome Office ([udrome@udallas.edu](mailto:udrome@udallas.edu)) and the Rome campus ([bgibbs@udallas.edu](mailto:bgibbs@udallas.edu)) updated of any and all changes to these plans before and during travel. The Rome administration will organize and batch students together. UD Rome will pay the car service directly and then bill the students afterwards for the price of the service. Depending on the student's arrival location and time, and the size of the group taking an individual car, services range in price from €25-€75.

#### European Airport Transfers for Own Arrangements Students:

**Q:** Should students making transfers or connections in European airports expect additional COVID-19 screening?

**A:** Yes, recent travelers to the Rome campus have reported increased COVID-19 screening in European airports. As such, students should proceed promptly to their connection gate and ensure no further screening is necessary before boarding their flight to Rome.

#### Rome Campus Arrivals:

**Q:** What should students expect upon arrival to campus?

**A:** Rome program staff will welcome students to campus, take their temperatures, and show them into their private living spaces. Upon arrival, if a student records a fever above 37.5°C that student will be placed immediately into our isolation area. Students will have open access to all campus facilities and services upon arrival and will begin a normal period of orientation and welcome in the first few days of arrival. Students should remember, though, that mask and social distancing policies are in effect throughout campus.

#### Access to Snacks on Campus During Quarantine:

**Q:** Owing to the fact that students cannot leave campus for groceries, will students have access to snacks and drinks outside of meal service?

**A:** Yes, the Rome campus Capp Bar will be open every day for several hours at a time for snack and drink purchases. Food and drink options include coffee, tea, soda, bottled water, fruit, chips, cookies, and candy. Gluten and lactose free items are also available. The Rome campus is currently exploring options to offer beer and wine for purchase.

#### Money Needs During Quarantine:

**Q:** Because of the 14 day quarantine, should students still bring some Euros to campus?

**A:** Yes. For purchase of Capp Bar items, laundry tokens, and campus gadgets, students will need to load a pre-paid card using either their Euros or their US dollars. Students cannot use credit cards for payments on the Rome Campus. Therefore, we encourage students to bring the equivalent of \$100 (or €100) with them in order to get through the quarantine period. After the quarantine is over and students have access to Euros, only transactions in Euros will be allowed on campus.

#### Social Distancing Guidelines During Quarantine:

**Q:** Do students have to social distance and wear masks on campus, even during the collective quarantine?

**A:** Yes, in line with the Italian Ministry of Health and [UD Irving's](#) guidelines, students must always wear masks indoors (except when alone in room or in one's dorm room with one's own roommate

and no one else). As for the outdoors, they must be worn there too when one meter (3 feet) of social distancing cannot be maintained between persons. Students should remember that a uniform, resolute obedience to quarantine parameters is the most effective action to ensure as short of a quarantine as possible.

Visiting Hours and Opportunities:

**Q:** Are students allowed to have other students in their private rooms, otherwise known as “open house hours”?

**A:** Yes, as long as all parties obey campus social distancing, mask, and COVID-19 prevention policies.

Work-Study During Quarantine:

**Q:** Will work study eligible students be able to start working during the quarantine?

**A:** Yes, during the orientation period all work study eligible students who want to work on the Rome campus will be hired and trained. We expect students to start working shifts in the Capp Bar and library as soon as the second week on campus.

Online Classes:

**Q:** During the first two weeks of online classes, will we need to meet our class in a live-streaming format or just pick up work from Brightspace?

**A:** In addition to general obligatory policies in place for the whole university, each professor has a slightly different policy in place for his/her class. In general, we will follow Irving policy to the extent that all professors will post their syllabus and reading materials on Brightspace, plus keep their gradebook there. We will also follow Irving in making video copies of all lectures available on Brightspace. Beyond that, within the next couple of weeks you will be receiving further instructions from every professor as to his/her mode of online instruction, be it live streamed or prerecorded.

In Person Classes During the Quarantine Period:

**Q:** How and where will our classes be conducted during the quarantine period?

**A:** We will be having outdoor classes, under an open-air tent, during those first two weeks. Your professors will teach from a covered podium located outside of the quarantine zone using microphones and speakers to project their voices. Students will be in a large multi-purpose tent within the quarantine zone, and can ask questions by accessing a microphone. Two adjustments to the norm look to be likely. First, if Powerpoints presentations are used, students will need to bring a laptop or smartphone in order to see the presentations. Second, instead of meeting in sections, students will meet in plenary sessions.

Information about UD anti-COVID Policies:

**Q:** We received a lot of information about the University's reopening plans and COVID containment protocols in general and Rome's preparation in particular. Is that information brought together in one single place so that I can easily access it?

**A:** The single best and most comprehensive guide to University policy is to be found here: <https://www.udallas.edu/coronavirus/campus-reopening/index.php>. Scrolling down the menu to the section called "Rome Campus", you'll find a series of links to specific Rome news as well.

### ITALIAN COVID UPDATES

- Italy: In truth, there has not been a lot of news about COVID in the past couple of weeks. Although summer holidays and summer tourism have increased the [number of new cases](#) slightly, it's clear that Italian containment policies continue to work well. If you want more

information on recent trends in the virus and government actions, please see the [Italian Ministry of Health's website](#).

- USA: As of August 6<sup>th</sup> the U.S. Department of State [has lifted its code-red \(level 4 "do not travel"\) travel warning](#) and replaced it with individual country alerts. Italy is categorized [code-orange \(level 3 "reconsider travel"\)](#). U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Italy have resumed regular activities and issued [this travel advice](#) for U.S. citizens.

I hope that this first of our regular Friday updates has been useful to you all. Please do write either me at [phatlie@udallas.edu](mailto:phatlie@udallas.edu) or Mrs. Davies at [bdavies@udallas.edu](mailto:bdavies@udallas.edu) at your convenience if you have questions and concerns that you think I can address.

Sincerely Yours,



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