



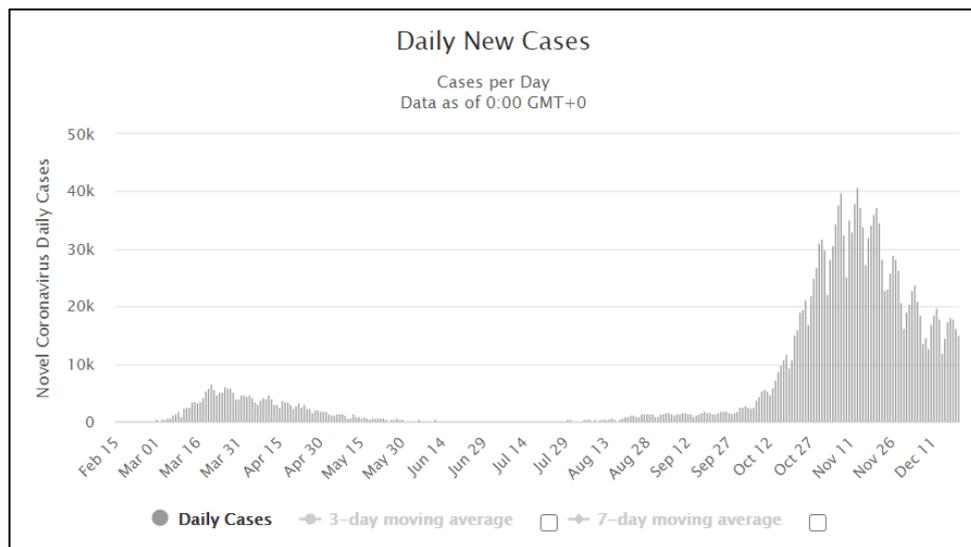
UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

December 21, 2020

Dear Prospective Students, Parents, and Loved Ones of the Spring 2021 Rome Class,

This is a follow-up to my letter of November 30, 2020 regarding planning for the spring 2021 semester. The present letter contains yet another update for COVID-19 developments in Italy and offers additional guidance on preparing for your arrival in Rome on January 17, 2021.

- **CURRENT COVID-19 PICTURE IN ITALY.** At the time of my letter of late November, the number of active new cases was in slow but steady decline. Since that letter, anti-COVID-19 measures have continued to have a positive effect, moving the incidence of new cases from an average of 40,000 per day in early November, to 30,000 per day in late November, to around 15,000 per day today. The following graph captures the incidence of new cases in Italy through today, including the steady drop of recent weeks.



In line with this more hopeful picture, hospitals and their ICU units are also in much better shape now than before: to take the closest example, i.e. the situation of ICU beds in the region of Rome, the percentage of beds occupied has moved from around 40% to roughly 30% over the last three weeks. These downward trends should hold unless the upcoming holiday season upends the progress made to date. The Italian government is cognizant of the dangers of another wave breaking out as the result of holiday activity, and to discourage it they have just instituted a [hard lockdown across Italy](#) effective December 24 and continuing through January 6. The hope is that schools, government, and commercial activity will resume as normal after that.

- **COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM IN ITALY:** Although the COVID-19 vaccination program will not begin until the first weeks of January 2021, the government has promised a rapid implementation plan over the course of the coming year. As many as 12 million doses will be available for Italy's 60 million population by March 2021, followed by another 20 million by June, followed by another 50 million by the end of the year. If met, these

targets should all but eliminate COVID-19 in Italy by autumn 2021. Note, however, that our spring 2021 students and staff will likely not see the immediate benefit of this vaccination campaign, nor will it relieve us from observing all normal safety precautions.

- **AMENDED DUE SANTI PLEDGE:** In light of the new rules for travel between the U.S. and Italy, namely the requirement for travelers to obtain a negative COVID-19 test within 48 hours of departure and immediately upon arrival, there is no longer a formal need for students to observe a 14-day self-quarantine period in the U.S. before departure. Therefore, the following language in the Pledge is no longer applicable:

In preparation for my departure for Rome, I will reduce potential exposure to myself by adopting a self-quarantining regime for at least fourteen (14) days before my departure date. That regime includes, among other safety measures, staying within the family unit, not interacting with non-essential visitors at home, not leaving the family unit except when recommended by a medical professional, not using public transport and avoiding all crowds, maintaining social distancing at home in case of a family member suspected of having contracted the COVID virus.

All other clauses of the Pledge remain the same, except this one. We still recommend a period of self-isolation, of course, since that is the surest way for everyone to avoid catching COVID-19. What has changed is simply the fact that the test results of one student no longer affect (as they did in fall 2020 when we were required to observe a collective quarantine during the first 14 days of the in-person semester) the trajectory of all students. Accordingly, a student's failure to protect him/herself before departing Italy will result only in his/her inability to participate in our program as planned and not affect the safety and viability of the in-person phase of the Rome semester itself. The most likely scenario for those who test positive before leaving is that they will not be able to board the plane for Italy at all, leaving them the option either to delay their arrival to the in-person phase of the Rome semester until they can produce a negative test result and be certified for international travel or to withdraw entirely. For those testing positive on arrival, the most likely scenario is that they will need to quarantine for 14-days on our campus.

- **REMINDER ABOUT NEW TRAVEL RULES FOR AMERICANS TRAVELLING TO ITALY.** The Italian Ministry of Health has just issued an ordinance (no. 294, dated November 24, 2020) allowing travelers the opportunity to avoid an initial 14-day quarantine period upon arrival in Italy if they meet the following requirements:
 - Airport of departure to Italy is either JFK (NY), Newark (NJ), Atlanta (GA), Frankfurt (Germany), or Munich (Germany).
 - Airport of arrival is Rome (FCO) airport.
 - Travelers have in their possession a document certifying a negative result on a Covid-19 molecular or antigen test carried out no earlier than 48 hours before departure; tests done at the airport itself are acceptable.
 - Travelers agree to submit to a COVID-19 test upon arrival at Rome (FCO) and test negative.
- **PRE-DEPARTURE TESTING AT THE UD IRVING CAMPUS:** We encourage students to obtain testing in their home city on either January 14th or better yet January 15th before boarding a plane for Italy. If you live in the DFW area and want to set up a guaranteed testing appointment, please contact the [University of Dallas Student Health Clinic](#), where

walk-in testing can be done and results obtained immediately on Friday, January 15, 2020 between the hours of 9:00am-12:00pm and 1:00-4:00pm, at a cost of \$50. To find other testing services in the DFW area and across the country, please consult <https://www.gogettested.com/>.

- **SELF DECLARATION FORM FOR TRAVELERS ENTERING ITALY:** Please download, fill out, sign and carry with you the following form in order to ensure that understand and have met all of the anti-COVID measures required by the Italian government: https://www.esteri.it/mae/resource/doc/2020/12/modulo_rientro_sintetico_4_dicembre_per_eng.pdf. Allow us to take this opportunity to remind you to keep all the official documents and items you are carrying with you, notably your passport, in a safe and accessible place throughout your travels.
- **INDEPENDENT STUDENT TRAVEL DURING THE SPRING 2021 SEMESTER:** Because of ongoing concerns about the spread of COVID-19 across Europe, EU governments are still taking a cautious stance towards opening up borders. The hope is that COVID-19 rates will stabilize and indeed come down over the next several weeks, thus allowing for greater mobility within Europe by late January and early February. Your best source for how things stand at any given moment is <https://reopen.europa.eu/en>, although please note that not all information about mobility is captured here in a timely manner. For now, we recommend that students not make advance plans for travelling—e.g. booking airline tickets and hotel reservations— until they arrive on campus and can get a lay of the land. For the very same reasons, we have updated the semester calendar to include more class-time and more time in Italy in the early weeks of the semester in the hope and expectation that by March travel throughout Europe will fully open up again.
- **UPDATED SEMESTER CALENDAR:** Attached with this letter you will find an updated version of the spring 2021 calendar. The main changes here, as discussed above, consist of intensifying class meetings, Rome activities, and Italian travel in the first weeks of the semester as a preemptive measure against possible restrictions on travel in Europe at large during January and February owing to COVID-19. Needless to say, we cannot predict what the world will look like one to two months from now. Our best estimate, however, is that full freedom of mobility will return to Italy by mid-January while full mobility in Europe will need to wait to early- or mid-March. This scenario would nicely accommodate the expanded opportunities for independent student travel that we have scheduled for March and April, as well as our mid-April Greece trip.
- **REMINDER SCHEDULE CHANGES, SUSPENSION OF SEMESTER AND CANCELLATION OF SEMESTER POLICIES:** Nothing currently suggests that we will encounter grievous disruptions to our planning for spring, nor is it probable that serious and even minor disruptions will inevitably take place. Our biggest concern at the moment is the timing of mobility measures in Italy and Europe, as discussed above, together with the timing of museum and archaeological site re-openings in Rome and across Italy. However, in light of that above "known unknowns" of human behavior and government policy in this age of COVID-19, we need to be honest and direct with all you in regard to the following policies:
 - Contingency Planning: We reserve the right to change our semester planning, even last minute, in response either to a renewed international health emergency that would compromise the safety of the Rome Campus community or to governmental policies that restrict our normal activities, including but not limited to classes, Masses and other religious-life activities, sponsored and independent

travel plans, and student life activities.

- Student Refund for Services Not Rendered: In the event of a cancelled or interrupted spring 2021 semester, students will not be entitled to any tuition refund as classes move online, but they will be refunded on a prorated basis for any refundable services not rendered, such as cafeteria meals and group trip fees for the faculty led trips to Greece and Northern Italy.
- Airfare Ticket Change Fees: If the spring 2021 semester were to be cancelled prior to departure or if the semester were to be cancelled or interrupted after departure resulting in the need for an emergency repatriation, students will be responsible for any flight change fees and fare differences.
- Finishing Rome Classes: If the Rome-Program classes are already well in session when the Program is suspended or cancelled, it will not be possible for students to return to live classes in Irving. They will complete their Rome courses virtually with their Rome professors giving online classes. If the Program is cancelled prior to the opening date of the semester, our Irving campus will do everything in its power to open up space in Irving classes and dorms, but availability in the dorms is not guaranteed.

Thank you, as always, for your patience and understanding with us as we try to navigate the opportunities and challenges of conducting a first-rate study-abroad program in times like these. Please do write us with your questions or concerns. I can be reached in Rome at phtalie@udallas.edu. Our Director of Rome and Summer Programs in Irving, Mrs. Rebecca Davies, can be reached at bdavies@udallas.edu.

To close, let me wish you all a very peaceful and blessed Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy and productive New Year.

Sincerely Yours,



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