



COVID-19 STATEMENT TO STUDENTS SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PANDEMIC

We are living in unique and uncertain times. None of us can know what the future holds for sure, but at the University of the Incarnate Word, we know this – we are dedicated to providing our students with a full University experience in Fall 2020. We at UIW are working hard and are confident that the academic and non-academic support services and curriculum will be the excellent academic, collegial and productive experience that drew you to UIW, whether delivered live, in a hybrid environment, or entirely remotely.

We recognize that you are seeking certainty; we all are. COVID-19, the virus responsible for the current global pandemic, is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. Research supports that the virus primarily spreads through respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. In addition, many people who contract the virus may be asymptomatic and unknowingly spread the virus. However, the full extent of how the virus transmits is unknown. Currently, there is no vaccine available for the virus nor known treatment for the adverse effects attributed to COVID-19.

The risk of exposure and possible infection is real and present in any community environment where large numbers of people are regularly interacting, including on campuses at UIW. We are engaged in numerous efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the spread of COVID-19 on our campuses. Efforts include increased cleaning, implementation of mask and face-covering protocols, social distancing, hand sanitizing stations, and other mitigation strategies.

Despite the University's best efforts, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of positive cases or an outbreak on our campuses – while still operating on-campus classes, residential housing, and campus events. We cannot guarantee that people present on our campuses will not be exposed to and become infected with COVID-19. By engaging in the on-campus community of UIW, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

As a Catholic institution of faith and education, UIW is committed to acknowledging and honoring the dignity of every person, as each is created in the image of God. We must all take steps to care for each other. Taking steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infections (or any other spread of disease) at UIW and in our community is a shared responsibility and a critical part of caring for all who live, work and learn with us. Students can help keep our community healthy by being mindful of their actions at all times and following the on-campus health and safety protocols.

Please understand that whether on any UIW campus or remote, a few things are certain:

- UIW holds as paramount the health, safety and welfare of every member of its community.
- None of us can guarantee what shape COVID-19 will take, and none of us – including UIW – can guarantee a COVID-19-free environment. This is simply not feasible. We want to be sure that you appreciate and understand that, by coming onto the physical campus of UIW, there is a risk you may contract COVID-19. We certainly do not wish this on anyone, and we are taking recommended steps to mitigate this risk, but we cannot categorically guarantee this will not happen.
- Every member of our community – including you – must do their part. This means adhering to national, state, local, and university health and safety guidelines and requirements, whether on or off campus, including complying with mandatory reporting guidelines of the CDC and UIW. Specific details will be provided as circumstances dictate, but this may include such things as: temperature checks, social distancing, wearing masks or other facial coverings, using other PPE, reporting suspected and positive

infections, not reporting to class or work if sick, and isolating and quarantining when required. You agree to do all of this not just for yourself, but for the safety of others, and because this is consistent with the Mission and spirit of how we care for one another at UIW.

Dated July 7, 2020