



UNM-TAOS COVID-19 UPDATE

September 4, 2020

On Wednesday, September 2, 2020, UNM-Taos staff received notification that two students self-reported as having tested positive for COVID-19, as required by the process established by UNM Main Campus (UNM) and UNM-Taos. Both students were asymptomatic.

Per the guidelines set in place by the campus in the [UNM Bringing Back the Pack](#) policies and the [UNM-Taos Campus Reopening Plan](#), which was approved by the NM Higher Education Department, the following actions immediately took place:

- Upon receipt of the notification, UNM-Taos and UNM employed rapid response procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, faculty, and the Taos community.
- Based on the requirements of established rapid response procedures, UNM-Taos established communications with the students, UNM Main Campus, the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH), and Holy Cross Medical Center in order to ensure proper reporting, contact tracing, testing, and, subsequent quarantine protocols.
- The two students provided information to a designated UNM Contact Tracer. One student has since been cleared. The second student is currently in quarantine and will be cleared upon meeting the criteria as defined in the Bringing Back the Pack protocol.
- The students, who were on our campus to attend a “live” class, entered and occupied only one building. This building, which contained the classroom, was closed temporarily for facilities management and custodial staff to sanitize and disinfect the building.
- Based on further rapid response requirements, The University and the Department of Health initiated contact tracing for possible exposure to others.
- COVID-19 Safe Practices (CSPs) were strictly followed on campus facilities. Students, faculty, and staff with concern of potential exposure, though minimal risk existed, were guided to publicly available testing resources as a precaution.
- NM DOH, UNM, and UNM-Taos remain in close communication with the quarantined students, staff and faculty, in order to monitor the status of their health and wellness, ensure they have support for remote learning/work, and access to any additional supports they may need. This includes local resources as well as the UNM Student Health and Counseling (SHAC).

The affected students were attending one of only a few in-person (face-to-face) courses offered this term. All in-person classes require strict adherence to the following COVID Safe Practices and protocols: responding to a daily screening email survey that all employees and students are required to answer; temperature checks prior to entering the building; limited class size to ensure a minimum of six-foot distancing, and the wearing of PPE (masks, gloves, and face shields).

UNM and UNM-Taos have worked diligently over the past six months to implement policies to ensure the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and community that we serve and have established protocols to prevent exposure and spread of COVID-19. The culmination resulted in the ability to respond promptly and in adherence to state and institutional policies. We wish to express our thanks to UNM, NM Department of Health, and Holy Cross Medical Center staff for their immediate and ongoing support and communication.

All questions related to this matter should be directed to Anita Bringas at abringas@unm.edu.