COVID-19 at Whitman

Anderson Hall Quarantine
As you were made aware in an email last night from Peter Harvey, chair of the Coronavirus Task Force, nine positive COVID-19 cases were detected yesterday in students living at Anderson Hall. In consultation with our epidemiologist, we decided the most efficient way to stop the spread of COVID-19 on our campus was to quarantine all students living on the floor impacted by these positive cases. This decision is based on the number of positive cases and the possibility of student movement through the residential life network, which includes meals in the dining hall and other community events.

For the duration of this quarantine, all students in Anderson are restricted to their residence hall. They will not be allowed to return to their residence hall to retrieve personal belongings until the time the student is expected to test negative.

Pools—sometimes referred to as pool testing or pooled testing—means combining respiratory samples from several people and conducting one laboratory test on the combined pool of samples to detect SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Pooling allows laboratories to test more samples with fewer testing materials. If a pooled test result is negative, then all the samples can be presumed negative. If a pooled test result is positive, then the pool will need to be tested individually to determine which samples are positive.

We are working with our local health department to determine the best way to proceed with the quarantine. We will continue to communicate with the campus community as this situation evolves.

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Q: What does it mean that Whitman’s COVID-19 surveillance testing is “pool testing”?
A: Pooling—sometimes referred to as pool testing or pooled testing—means combining respiratory samples from several people and conducting one laboratory test on the combined pool of samples to detect SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Pooling allows laboratories to test more samples with fewer testing materials. If a pooled test result is negative, then all the samples can be presumed negative. If a pooled test result is positive, then the pool will need to be tested individually to determine which samples are positive.

What is close contact or close exposure?
Close contact or close exposure is defined as follows: A close contact is a person within six feet of an infected person. Close contact also includes people who share or have shared a居所 or workplace with an infected person. For purposes of this policy, close contact or close exposure includes people who share the same household, those who have been in close physical, social, or occupational contact with an infected person, or those who have been in close contact with an infected person for any length of time.

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