Resolution for Publicization of COVID-19 Statistics for The University of Alabama

WHEREAS having clear daily information about COVID-related health risks based on explicit population-level data (i.e., how many faculty/staff/students have positive tests, hospitalizations, and/or deaths) is essential for members of the campus and Tuscaloosa communities to protect themselves;

WHEREAS The University of Alabama System has provided no means for disseminating those statistics to faculty, staff, students, or members of the Tuscaloosa community who interact with them on a daily basis;

WHEREAS the University’s and UA System’s Return Plans provide no information on the threshold of COVID-19 spread (campus-wide positivity rate) that would necessitate a return to Remote Business Operations and/or remote learning, leaving members of the campus community uncertain, fearful, and unable to plan flexibly for possible outcomes in the Fall 2020 semester;

WHEREAS the University’s and UA System’s Return Plans do not provide specific details of how and when faculty, staff, and students will be notified if they have come into contact with an infected person (e.g., if a student in a class has tested positive) so that we can make appropriate decisions regarding cancelling in-person class meetings, self-quarantining, etc.;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate requests for the University administration and COVID-19 response team, and the UA System Office, to take the following actions:

- Create an online platform for each campus in the UA System similar to the Alabama Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 Dashboard or the COVID information page provided by Troy University, accessible to both the UA community and the general public, for the dissemination of statistics related to the spread of COVID-19 among the campus community;
- Update this platform at least weekly as the results of each batch of sentinel tests and tests of symptomatic individuals becomes available;
- Provide specific information about contact tracing operations at the University and within the UA System, including but not limited to the number of contact tracers hired; what specifically will be deemed to constitute “exposure” to the virus and how that information will be systematically collected; and the methods that will be used to notify members of the campus community of possible COVID exposure;
- Establish and disseminate to all members of the campus community a clear designation of the multiple factors that will be used to determine actions to be taken as different thresholds of COVID-19 community spread are reached on our campus, both across the University generally and within specific classes, dormitories, student groups, or other sub-communities of the University. These should be publicized in multiple hard-to-miss venues, including press releases, social media platforms, and email.

Passed by the University of Alabama Faculty Senate on August 18, 2020.