

Benjamin Erhardt, *Keough Hall Senator*  
Patrick O. Lee, *Stanford Hall Senator*  
Ricardo F. Pozas Garza, *Club Coordination Council President*  
Mairead Pfaff, *Student Union Board Executive Director*  
Eliza Smith, *Johnson Family Hall Senator*  
Elaine Teeters, *McGlenn Hall Senator*  
Sara Kirsch, *Breen-Phillips Hall Senator*  
Will Forsen, *Carroll Hall Senator*

**A RESOLUTION VOICING STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT NOTRE DAME'S  
RECENT ADJUSTMENTS TO CAMPUS LIFE POLICIES AND CALLING THE  
CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL TO ACTION**

*Whereas*, [the Principles of University of Notre Dame's strategic plan](#) state that, “[o]ur first and most fundamental operational charge is to protect the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. All of us at Notre Dame assume responsibility for creating an environment that prioritizes the physical and emotional wellbeing of members of our community”;

*Whereas*, the purpose of the Student Senate, as outlined in Article III, Section 1(a) of the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Body of the University of Notre Dame du Lac is to “formulate and advance the position of the undergraduate student body on all issues concerning campus life”;

*Whereas*, the current state of campus life has generated much agitation, bewilderment, and [concern](#) amongst students and members of the Notre Dame community, and the Senate wishes to formally raise those concerns to University leadership;

*Whereas*, on February 17th, 2021, University of Notre Dame Vice President for Student Affairs Erin Hoffman Harding and Vice President for Campus Safety and University Operations Mike Seamon shared a letter with the campus community titled “[Campus Modifications in Response to Case Rates](#),” which outlined the University’s planned response to a significant increase in positive COVID-19 cases amongst the Notre Dame community from February 8th, 2021 to February 16th, 2021;

*Whereas*, the aforementioned letter cited that this increase in cases could be traced mostly to “undergraduate students on campus” and “unmasked interaction between students in small, informal social settings”; further, it announced various adjustments to on-campus student life that would “address this concerning trend of positive cases” and be “effective Thursday, Feb. 18 through at least Monday, March 1,” including:

- “All student activities will be offered virtually”;
- “Seating capacity in several lounges and dining locations, including all dining tents, Duncan Student Center, LaFortune Student Center, Rasmus Club, and the North and South Quad Lodges will be reduced by approximately 25% to increase distancing”;

**Resolution SS 2021-27****March 10, 2021**

- “Undergraduate residence hall visitation will regrettably be limited only to residents of that hall”;
- “Students may still attend Mass in any residence hall, but they must depart from the hall after the liturgy ends”; and,
- In-person instruction and research may continue, as these events were not deemed to be sources of COVID-19 transmission;

*Whereas*, on [February 26th, 2021](#) and [March 5th, 2021](#), follow-up letters were shared with the campus community outlining subsequent adjustments to campus life, which at present include:

- “Recognized clubs and organizations may reserve outdoor space for programs and events [...and] may hold indoor programs [...] subject to capacity and duration limits determined by the Student Activities Office (SAO). A professional staff member or student manager will be present and make rounds in these buildings during all scheduled events.”
- “RecSports intramural and club practices may resume both outdoors and indoors. A professional staff member or student manager must be present at all scheduled practices.”
- “University departments may host student activities in any reservable indoor space if a staff or faculty member is present for the entire event.”
- “Clubs and organizations may host meetings or programs in classrooms only if classroom seating is utilized and maintained for the duration of the event.”
- A select number of students are now allowed to attend Varsity athletic events in-person.

*Whereas*, the February 26th follow-up letter highlighted recent large gatherings of students off-campus as cause for concern, implying that these events could lead to increased case counts and ultimately delay the continued rollback of campus life restrictions;

*Whereas*, during the Fall 2020 semester, Notre Dame implemented extensive restrictions to campus life that limited social interaction both inside and outside of the classroom for a two-week period in order to curb an early-semester spike in COVID-19 cases;

*Whereas*, despite case rates falling and staying low shortly after the implementation of the aforementioned restrictions, informal social gatherings remained more restricted on-campus relative to organized formal gathering (e.g. common spaces remained closed in residence halls);

*Whereas*, continued restrictions on informal gathering on-campus despite several weeks of low case rates drove more students to gather off-campus during the latter stages of the Fall 2020 semester, which in turn was one cause of both the second surge in COVID-19 cases seen across the Notre Dame campus community during that time and also the increase in mental distress witnessed amongst undergraduate students, as reported through a survey conducted by the McDonald Center for Student Well Being;

*Whereas*, through conversations with their constituencies and the student body at large, members of the Student Senate have formulated the following positions on matters pertaining to the current state of campus life:

1. First and foremost, the Student Senate strongly urges all members of the Notre Dame community to continue wearing masks, observe capacity limits, and avoid large social gatherings at which pertinent health protocols are not being observed, both on- or off-campus; further, the Student Senate condemns actions taken by students who blatantly ignore public health measures such as mask wearing and avoiding large gatherings;
2. Secondly, the Student Senate expresses gratitude to University leadership for working to ensure an in-person Spring 2021 semester may occur during this continued time of pandemic, welcomes the most recent announcements of adjustments to campus life, and wishes to emphasize that all points made in this resolution are expressed in order to raise legitimate concerns of campus community members that if addressed would increase the success of the in-person Spring 2021 semester;
3. The Student Senate acknowledges that the recent increase in COVID-19 cases necessitated an appropriate response of University leadership through various modifications to campus life; however, based on the limited information available to students, the position of the Student Senate is that various modifications to campus life that were implemented on February 18th, 2021 were inconsistent and carried the potential to cause some degree of harm to the well-being of campus community members, particularly undergraduate students living on-campus;
4. It is the position of the Student Senate that if the regular practices of diligent mask wearing and capacity observance in classrooms and public spaces prevents COVID-19 transmission during the academic day, then mask wearing and capacity observance at other gatherings -- whether they be organized, informal, supervised, unsupervised, etc. -- should be equally effective at preventing COVID-19 transmission;
5. The Student Senate shares a strong concern that some campus life restrictions that took effect on February 18th, 2021 have driven students who live on campus to pursue informal socialization at locations off-campus in manners that carry a greater risk for COVID-19 transmission, and that this trend will arise once again should restrictions on gathering be reimplemented or remain stagnant throughout the Spring 2021 semester;
6. If opportunities for safe in-person informal gathering are further restricted in the future on-campus, the Student Senate believes that the social and mental well-being of those students who adhere to COVID-prevention measures consistently will be further strained (as was witnessed during the Fall 2020 semester), while students who have regularly violated COVID-prevention measures will likely continue to do so regardless of new restrictions brought forward;
7. The Student Senate expresses concern that data from contact tracing being used to inform University leadership in their campus life policy decision making is somewhat misleading or inaccurate due to students not sharing truthful information regarding the circumstances of a COVID-19 exposure out of fear of further retribution under the Campus Compact, despite efforts from the Coronavirus Response Unit to reassure that information shared with contact tracers is confidential;
8. The Student Senate fears that an antagonistic and unproductive “Us vs. Them” mentality is taking hold amongst many students due to a combination of general pandemic fatigue and mistrust in University leadership, and that such a mentality will continue to spread unless further transparency and communication measures are implemented (i.e. sharing

minutes from Student Advisory Group for Campus Reopening meetings;  
re-implementing virtual Student Town Halls);

9. Finally, the Student Senate expresses concern that if University leadership continues to implement campus life policies without sharing comprehensive rationale or fielding the public input of Student Union leadership and University bodies such as the Student Senate and the Campus Life Council -- bodies which represent the interests of the student body at large -- prior to implementation, an unhealthy culture of mistrust and miscommunication between the student body and University leadership will continue to develop, the consequences of which will extend beyond the current period of pandemic;

*Whereas*, the Student Senate wishes to reiterate that the objective of this resolution is to highlight the need for campus life policies that are consistent in their practicality and enforcement and are drafted with both the physical and emotional well-being of all members of the Notre Dame community in mind, so as to prevent students from participating in potentially unsafe gatherings off-campus in the short-term and preserve unity amongst members of the Notre Dame family in the long-term;

*Whereas*, it is the position of the Student Senate that the Campus Life Council may serve as an effective forum where representatives of all campus community members may share objective comments, concerns, and questions regarding any future campus life policy implementations in response to the pandemic, as the Council's chief purpose is to publicly advise and make policy recommendations to the Vice President of Student Affairs on matters of campus life (per Article I of the Bylaws of Campus Life Council);

*Whereas*, should this resolution be passed, it is the desire of the Student Senate that it be heard as soon as possible by the Campus Life Council per Article III, Section 3(f) of the Constitution;

***Resolved*, the Student Senate of the University of Notre Dame du Lac requests the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Campus Safety and University Operations provide more detailed rationale when communicating future modifications to campus life to help students and University community members better understand why certain policies are enacted; and be it**

***Further resolved*, the Student Senate of the University of Notre Dame du Lac requests that the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Campus Safety and University Operations disclose plans for campus life policy amendments -- including but not limited to those concerning informal gathering restrictions, residential life, and Student Organization gatherings -- with the Campus Life Council on a regular and proactive basis in order to:**

1. **Receive honest input and feedback from the Campus Life Council prior to the implementation of said policies to ensure consistency and effectiveness in their response to the changing pandemic conditions at Notre Dame;**
2. **To further involve the Student Body in decisions that will directly and significantly affect their overall Notre Dame experience and their ability to connect with peers and friends;**

3. To allot recognized student groups time to read, understand, and adapt to new changes and policies before they are implemented; and
4. Finally, to reestablish greater trust and communication between University leadership and the rest of the Notre Dame community in the current semester and future semesters ahead.



---

Rachel Ingal  
*Student Body President*