



City of Charlottesville Human Rights Commission

September 7th, 2020

Commissioners

Dear President Ryan,

Shantell Bingham
Chair

Sue W. Lewis
Vice Chair

Jeanette Abi-
Nader

Pheobe Brown

Ernest Chambers

Jessica Harris

Laura J.W.
Keppley

Kathryn Laughon

Andrew Orban

Lyndele von
Schill

Robert Woodside

Melvin Grady

Olivia Gabbay

Ann J. Smith

We appreciate your thoughtful correspondence. We understand the difficult choices that have been weighed and the University's final decision to allow students' return. While we do not agree with the University's final decision, we all depend upon your success. In some ways, the burden of responsibility for our community's well-being throughout the pandemic response has been shared. We write to emphasize steps that have been taken, concrete actions that need continued support and potentially additional resources to ensure minimal impacts from UVA's plan.

Sustain Regular Community COVID Testing

Throughout the summer, UVA Health has worked with a number of community partners to administer community testing events as well as provide avenues for daily COVID testing. These community testing events have targeted predominantly Black and Brown, low-wealth neighborhoods that have faced the biggest brunt of COVID. Dr. Amy Salerno has collaborated with many community stakeholder groups (Sin Barreras, Mount Zion First African Baptist Church, Westhaven Nursing Clinic/CRHA etc.) to spearhead these efforts with her colleagues Dr. Cameron Webb, Dr. Max Luna, and Dr. Mohan Nadkarni. We appreciate UVA's efforts and stress that they continue to sustain regular community COVID testing as well as daily tests without delays or decrease in frequency.¹

At each community test event, UVA Health provides 250 COVID tests. In addition to organized community events, UVA Health also provides up to 100 daily COVID tests during the hours of 2pm-4pm for community members. Especially with students' return to grounds, we expect these numbers to *at least* stay the same and plans for weekly recurring UVA community testing events to continue throughout the pandemic response. We urge you to commit additional staffing and resources to ensure these efforts are lasting and sustainable.

Increase Community Resources for PPE

In addition to testing, UVA Health has worked with community partners to ensure our most vulnerable COVID positive cases have what they need to safely shelter in place during their recovery. While other partners have sourced prepared meals, shelf-stable food, filling prescriptions, temporary re-housing needs and more, UVA has played a vital role by sourcing PPE. This has included equipping households with face masks & shields, bottles of hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and wipes. In addition to direct support for COVID positive cases, UVA Health has also provided PPE during community testing (both weekly and daily events). Now more than ever, it's critical that we retain UVA's commitment as the PPE sourcing partner of the COVID Care wrap around support.

To date, the model has supported 44 cases totaling more than 130 individuals in our area. These residents may be low-wage workers without paid sick leave or healthcare, and more than 90% of them are Black or Hispanic. Due to the success of the model, Thomas Jefferson Health District, the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, as well as stakeholders at UVA Health and Sentara Hospital, have collaborated to formally scale the model. Therefore, we ask the University to remain committed to its role in sourcing PPE (during testing events & with follow-

up cases) as well as meet the potential increase in demand as part of the COVID Care district wide scale up.

Provide COVID-Related Support for *All* Employees at UVA (Contract Workers, Wage Workers, and Salaried)

When UVA provides avenues to support our community through testing as well as sourcing PPE, we're able to strengthen our relationship and directly heal past and present harms committed by the University. While the combined impact of COVID testing and PPE should help safeguard our community's health, many frontline workers at the University are still at increased risk from students' return to grounds. These workers are our neighbors, family and friends. Many of them are members of highly impacted communities that may lose significant income and face eviction should they catch COVID.

Therefore if the University has not done so, our final request is for UVA to offer COVID-related paid sick-leave and health care for *all* employees and/or contractors at UVA - that are at risk of increased exposure from their jobs² (e.g. Dining hall staff that come down with COVID from working long shifts indoors serving hundreds of students; dormitory cleaning staff that must clean spaces indoors among students where mask wearing *is not required*). In addition to this, *we urge the University to encourage all Fraternity and Sorority Governing Councils to implement actions to protect their housing and nutrition staff, and cover COVID related costs should workers fall sick.* Put simply, no one should have to lose their life or fall critically ill from serving the University either from cleaning after their students or nourishing them.

President Ryan, we hope these asks do not come as surprises to you. As previously mentioned, many of the requests are work UVA has already been doing. We write to stress that UVA's role in our community has been critical already, and with the return of students' we expect no less from the University and in some areas, such as PPE or sick-leave, we have requested a doubling down or additional resources to ensure our community remains safe and healthy.

As the semester continues, we encourage UVA to continue their work with Charlottesville City Council and the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors to reach regional solutions for our broader community, essential workforce, University staff, and students (Residential Advisors).

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing back from the University about these commitments.

In pursuit of justice, we serve,



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¹ Note: We understand the potential for increased staffing demands for inpatient care that might strain personnel resources for staffing testing events and conducting outreach in the community. We'd like to emphasize that the Health Department's efforts focusing their testing outreach in the surrounding counties has allowed UVA to focus more on Charlottesville and Albemarle and its critical to sustain this collaborative focus. <https://newsroom.uvahealth.com/2020/08/07/free-covid-19-community-testing-charlottesville/>

² Note: While we don't have access to the details, we acknowledge your steps to protecting frontline workers as indicated on your HR website, and encourage the University to communicate clearly and directly with all staff and the public the resources available to support them through this time. <https://hr.virginia.edu/covid-19>