RICE CULTURE OF CARE AGREEMENT & COVID-19 FAQ FOR STUDENTS

SECTIONS:
- GENERAL POLICY/EXPECTATIONS
- CLARIFICATION ON CULTURE OF CARE AGREEMENT RULES AND EXPECTATIONS
- STUDENT TRAVEL DURING 2020
- ENFORCEMENT
- STUDENT ROLES RELATED TO COVID-19

GENERAL POLICY/EXPECTATIONS

1. Who are the primary decision makers for COVID-19 related issues?
   Rice has a Crisis Management Team (“CMT”) that meets regularly to monitor COVID-19 related issues on campus. The CMT makes decisions related to the rules and expectations of anyone either coming to campus or interacting with other people that may come to campus. The decisions of the CMT are applicable to faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

   The Dean of Undergraduates, Dean Gorman, also makes decisions, in consultation with the CMT team, related to student expectations and policies in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the undergraduate student population.

2. How will new rules and expectations, or changes to the current rules, be communicated to students?
   Rice will communicate both changes to current practices and new rules or expectations via Rice email. In order to have a clear understanding of the ways in which Rice is preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our community, students should be diligent in fully reading any emails that they receive from any university official at Rice.

   In an effort to provide clarity when current policies change, or when new rules and expectations are implemented, this FAQ document will be updated to reflect those changes.

3. When will students get updates regarding changes to social gathering rules, including whether or not campus will remain “dry”?
   The Dean’s Office is closely monitoring several aspects of student life on campus to evaluate when and if campus will be “wet.” One of the main indicators of whether or not alcohol consumption will be permitted on campus in the future is the results of Rice’s robust and ongoing testing for COVID-19 in our population. If there is a change in the ways in which alcohol will be permitted on campus, students will hear about that change directly from Dean Gorman via their Rice email. The Dean will also share this information directly with the residential college magisters as well as the SA and college presidents.
4. What are the steps taken for a student that moves into the residential colleges part-way through the semester?

Several steps are required to move to campus mid-semester, including:

- Update the Dean’s Office on their change in residence status through the link provided via email on August 4th and again on August 31st;
- Send an email to covidtesting@rice.edu to schedule a testing appointment when they first arrive on campus;
- Communicate their arrival time with their College Coordinator and Magister, and arrange details with them for quarantining until PCR test results are returned.
- If a student has a question about returning to campus, they can email Dean Gorman at ugdean@rice.edu.

5. Who should students go to if they have questions about the current policies in place related to COVID-19?

Students should consult the information on https://coronavirus.rice.edu and https://coronavirus.rice.edu/policies for updates about policies and expectations. Students should also visit the undergraduate students page at https://coronavirus.rice.edu/undergraduate-students for a list of all communications that Dean Gorman has sent to students related to coronavirus, and information for living and learning on the Rice campus.

If students have specific questions about how the expectations related to COVID-19 apply to their specific situation or circumstances, Student Judicial Programs and the Dean’s Office can assist. To reach Student Judicial Programs, please email sjp@rice.edu; to reach the Dean’s Office please email ugdean@rice.edu.

6. When will students receive an update related to rules and expectations for Spring 2021?

While a specific date has not been determined, Rice will communicate information in as timely a manner as possible. CMT has already begun discussing spring semester, but as the status of COVID-19 in Texas and across the globe continues to evolve, additional time is needed to plan and announce details on the format of spring semester.

7. Do faculty and staff also have to follow the guidelines for mask wearing and physical distancing? If students have concerns about faculty not following the COVID-19 guidelines, whom should they contact?

Yes, all members of the Rice community must be following the rules for physical distancing and mask wearing. If a student has concerns about faculty not wearing a mask and feel comfortable to do so, they can contact the department to express concerns. If a student does not feel comfortable doing so, they may contact Associate Dean of Students, Allison Vogt, by emailing avogt@rice.edu. Associate Dean Vogt will contact the department and share the concerns while maintaining the student’s privacy.

CLARIFICATION ON CULTURE OF CARE AGREEMENT RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Do you have to wear a mask while exercising on the outer loop?

While Rice encourages students exercising on the outer loop to continue wearing a mask if it is at all physically possible, it is not mandatory.
2. Can students who are roommates be outside together with no masks and not physically distanced?
   No. Everyone must wear a mask and remain physically distanced at all times while outdoors unless they are actively eating or drinking.

3. Can students who are roommates be in spaces that have a COVID-19 occupancy limit of 1 if they are the only people in the space (ex: study room)?
   No. Students must adhere to the posted COVID-19 occupancy limit of any space, regardless of whether the individuals using the space are roommates or suitemates.

4. How long will the “no eating in the commons” rule be in effect?
   The Dean of Undergraduates as well as the CMT are working to assess the state of the campus weekly to determine which restrictions can be lifted, and when. When a determination is made that students may eat in the commons, Dean Gorman will send a message to the campus community announcing this change in policy.

5. What if I am visiting a friend that lives off-campus? Do I have to wear a mask and physically distance at the off-campus residence?
   Yes, the Culture of Care Agreement applies to guests in the residences of students that live off campus. Students visiting the off campus residences of other students must wear a mask and physically distance themselves in those spaces.

6. If I live off campus, can I have guests over to my residence? What are the expectations for those gatherings?
   Yes, students that live in off campus residences may have guests. The number of guests must follow the size limits in the Culture of Care Agreement. Regardless of the number of guests, students must have the space to physically distance at all times inside the residence or in any outdoor area of the residence. Guests at off campus residences must wear masks at all times. The students living in the off campus residence will also be expected to wear masks when guests are in the space.

7. Is eating in a restaurant considered “unsafe” according to the Culture of Care Agreement?
   No. Students are permitted to eat in off campus restaurants, however, the same rules apply in those locations. Masks must be worn at all times unless actively eating or drinking, and students are expected to maintain physical distancing. More generally, we would encourage you to evaluate how crowded, physically distanced, and well ventilated any establishment is before you choose to eat there.

**STUDENT TRAVEL DURING 2020**

1. What does “unnecessary travel” mean in the Culture of Care Agreement?
   There is no simple definition of what is necessary or unnecessary travel. Ultimately, this a decision for the individual themselves based on the risk and their personal responsibility. Our expectation is that students will not be traveling solely for pleasure and without purpose, and that they will exercise appropriate safety precautions when traveling to and from the Rice campus.

2. Are students permitted to travel outside of Houston? What about outside of Texas?
   Students may travel outside of Houston and Texas. Students traveling by plane or out of state will need to complete a COVID-19 test and quarantine when they return until their test comes back negative. If they should receive a positive test, they will go into isolation for 10 days.
3. If a student travels away from campus overnight, what is that student expected to do when they come back?

When traveling on an overnight trip, we expect you to take appropriate safety precautions when you travel (consistent mask use, physically distance, regular hand washing, etc). Much like our faculty and staff do when they come and go from campus each day, we recognize that members of our community will move on and off campus throughout the semester. If you are staying local and able to keep your weekly testing appointment, then you don’t need to do anything different if you should stay overnight off campus. If you’re traveling by plane or away from campus for an extended period of time, then you will need to arrange for testing on arrival back to campus, and quarantining until your test results come back.

ENFORCEMENT

1. Who is responsible for enforcing the rules around physical distancing and mask wearing?

As members of the Rice community, we all owe a duty to our fellow students and colleagues to actively care for one another. Under these circumstances related to COVID-19, this means that we are all responsible for holding each other accountable to following the guidelines that protect the health and safety of our community. That means that we all have a role to play when interacting with our peers, most frequently when it involves mask-wearing and physical distancing guidelines. When this community accountability is not effective or possible, the enforcement of these rules for undergraduate students will be handled by the student-led COVID-19 Community Court and Student Judicial Programs.

2. How does amnesty apply to the expectations in the Culture of Care Agreement? If I break the rules around physical distancing to help an overly intoxicated friend, will I get amnesty?

Amnesty will generally apply to reports of possible violations of the rules for student behavior in the Culture of Care Agreement. Students should always call REMS for another student who may be overly intoxicated. If there is a student who is providing help to another student by calling REMS or RUPD for medical assistance, both the student who called for help and the student whose intoxication created the need for the call would receive amnesty for violating the Culture of Care Agreement. Amnesty for any violations of the Alcohol Policy remains unchanged and will be considered according to the section of that policy that describes how amnesty is applied.

3. If someone reports sexual misconduct will they get amnesty for any violations of the Culture of Care Agreement?

Yes. The amnesty provisions provided for students reporting and witnessing sexual misconduct remain in place for all other student behavior which may otherwise violate the Code of Student Conduct, including violations of the Culture of Care Agreement.

4. If students disclose information about possible violations of the Culture of Care Agreement when they are speaking with the contact tracers, will that be reported?

The main purpose for the work of the contact tracers is to ensure that students are safe, and to provide support and resources. Contact tracers will not report any information gathered in their conversations with students to Student Judicial Programs or the COVID-19 Community Court.

5. If someone reports a Culture of Care Violation, do they have to give their name?

No. Any student or other community member may report student behavior through the form on Student Judicial Programs’ website, and the report may be made anonymously. Reporters who provide their name and contact information may be requested to provide more information by the COVID-19 Community Court and/or Student Judicial Programs, and every effort will be made
to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals making the report if anonymity is requested.

6. Where can you go to make a report of a possible violation of the Culture of Care Agreement and the COVID-19 guidelines?
   There is a form linked from SJP.rice.edu. The link to the form is https://sjp.rice.edu/form/covid19-feedback. This form is for reporting student behavior, not faculty or staff behavior.

7. Who is enforcing reported violations of the Culture of Care Agreement?
   Once a submission is received via the form, Student Judicial Programs will make a determination of whether the behavior should be heard by the COVID-19 Community Court or investigated within Student Judicial Programs. That analysis will be determined according to a variety of factors which are discussed further below. If referred to the COVID-19 Community Court, then the panel of student members will make contact with the student(s) whose behavior is at issue to discuss the behavior reported and any possible violations of the Culture of Care Agreement. If the matter is investigated by Student Judicial Programs, the student(s) will receive an email with instructions to meet with staff from that office.

8. What kinds of reports are referred to the COVID-19 Community Court?
   On-campus, low-level undergraduate student behavior will be referred to the COVID-19 Community Court for first-time accusations. Examples of these referrals could be violations of the mask-wearing and physical distancing requirements, or possibly the COVID-19 occupancy limits contained in the Culture of Care Agreement. Off campus behavior, as well as intentional, repeated, malicious or flagrant reported violations of the Culture of Care Agreement, alcohol-related violations and other behavior that may violate unrelated sections of the Code of Student Conduct will be investigated by Student Judicial Programs.

9. What kind of punishments does the COVID-19 Community Court use for students that they find in violation of the Culture of Care Agreement?
   A list of penalties and educational measures available to the COVID-19 Community Court include:
   - A monetary fine not to exceed $75. The fine will be used to support public health initiatives in the residential colleges.
   - A reflection paper to show that the student understands their infraction and will refrain from such behavior in the future. This sanction may include assigned required reading for the basis of the reflection.
   - A letter of apology to the person(s) potentially impacted by the behavior, or an apology directed to the college community as a whole.
   - An assignment that involves community education about public health risks (creating posters, researching cost-effective mask options, etc.).
   - A mandatory referral to the Student Wellbeing Office to meet with an advisor and discuss the potential community impact of the behavior.
   - Service on a volunteer team (possibly for a set number of hours) to assist with COVID-19 prevention efforts in the college.

10. Are decisions of the COVID-19 Community Court appealable?
    No. Unlike adjudications by Student Judicial Programs, decisions of the COVID-19 Community Court DO NOT result in a disciplinary record for the student. Any interaction with the COVID-19
Community Court will not be attached in any way to a student record at Rice. Low-level disciplinary actions with no impact on the student’s record are not appealable.

11. What if the report is handled by Student Judicial Programs? How are those sanctions determined for students found in violation of the Culture of Care Agreement?
   Possible low-level, first time violations of the Culture of Care Agreement that are investigated by Student Judicial Programs will be handled similarly to the cases resolved by the COVID-19 Community Court. The basis for the response to these types of cases will be educational and generally will not result in a student disciplinary record for low-level, initial violations.

   Intentional, repeated, malicious or flagrant violations of the Culture of Care Agreement that endanger the health and safety of other students or the greater Rice community will receive severe sanctions including possible rustication from campus or suspension. Examples of this behavior would include hosting large gatherings or parties, either on or off campus, where no physical distancing is enforced and participants fail to wear masks. These higher level sanctions will also apply to repeat violations of the Culture of Care Agreement, for example repeated failure to wear a mask in the college spaces.

12. What are the specific sanctions for violations of the Culture of Care Agreement handled by Student Judicial Programs?
   The behaviors that could potentially violate the Culture of Care Agreement vary widely, both in the nature of the behavior and in the level of danger that the various behaviors may have to the health and safety of the community. Student Judicial Programs will be adjudicating reported violations with an eye toward mitigating or eliminating the possibility of the spread of COVID-19 within the community - in other words, with an eye towards taking action, often immediately, to prevent ongoing threats to the health of the campus population. For these reasons, there are no pre-proscribed sanctions for violations of the Culture of Care Agreement. Reported violations will be handled in an individualized manner, on a case-by-case basis.

   Students that genuinely articulate an understanding of how their behavior negatively impacted the community, show self-awareness and reflection on errors of judgment, and demonstrate the methods in which they will moderate their behavior moving forward in compliance with the Culture of Care Agreement will generally be given an opportunity to retain their on campus privileges and remain a student at Rice for the fall semester. Students that willfully violate our community expectations for health and safety, especially those that violate these expectations repeatedly with little to no regard for the impact of their behavior, pose an ongoing threat to our community and will be removed from campus, and possibly suspended.

13. Will the punishments be different for on campus misconduct vs. off campus misconduct?
   No. The same factors will be considered when implementing sanctions for on and off campus misconduct.

14. What about dating partners? Can you visit your significant other without wearing a mask and physically distancing if they live off campus? What if they live on campus and you get the permission of their roommates to visit them?
   We encourage students who are in dating relationships to use as many precautions as they can, including wearing masks when around others and meeting in places outside of their colleges. There are no exceptions to the Culture of Care Agreement for dating partners and therefore all restrictions related to authorized persons in the residential spaces of the colleges will be enforced as written.
1. What is the role of a COVID-19 Public Health Ambassador (PHA)?
   COVID-19 Public Health Ambassadors (PHAs) are students that have been selected in each college to be a voice and an example for health and safety practices that aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. PHAs have received training from Student Health Services and the Student Wellbeing Office related to their duties in educating their college community about the expectations of students related to COVID-19. PHAs will be the points of contact in the colleges for disseminating information related to the importance of public health and each person’s role in protecting our peers and colleagues. The COVID-19 Public Health Ambassadors will work with their college Core Teams (magisters, RAs, college coordinators) and other student leaders in each college to help ensure the health and safety of the community.

2. Are the COVID-19 PHAs obligated to make reports of possible violations of the Culture of Care Agreement?
   No. PHAs may make reports of possible violations, just as any other community member, but they are not obligated to do so.

3. How do I find out who the COVID-19 PHAs are in my college?
   Students looking to find the PHAs in their college should contact their college Magisters. The list has also been shared with the college Core Team Sponsors at each college, and PHAs have been instructed to advertise themselves widely to the community.