

News Release

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UMW, Fredericksburg Work Together to Prevent Spread of Virus

(Fredericksburg, VA) October 13, 2020 - Longtime partners, the University of Mary Washington and the City of Fredericksburg, have teamed up once again. This time, in an effort to slow the spread of coronavirus in the local community.

When in-person classes resumed at UMW on Sept. 14, after a three-week delay prompted by the pandemic, the University enforced a strict “MMDC” – monitor, mask, distance and clean – policy, with reminders and precautionary measures set up across campus. With large numbers of college students back in the Fredericksburg area, a COVID-19 Joint Task Force, comprised of city officials and university administrators, began meeting weekly in August, even before their return, to ensure guideline compliance both on and off campus.

“The open dialogue of this task force between the City and UMW is very helpful for tracking the efforts and effects of COVID-19 both on campus and elsewhere in the City,” said Fredericksburg Fire Chief Michael Jones.

In addition to Jones, the group includes Fredericksburg Police Chief Brian Layton and Director of Economic Development Bill Freehling, along with UMW Chief of Police Mike Hall, Assistant Director of Athletics Caitlin Moore and Director of Transfer and Off-Campus Student Services Chris Porter.

“We are working together to make sure our students are doing what they should be doing,” Porter said. “We are not turning a blind eye.”

Seen as a “bridge” between the City and the University, the task force pools personnel in an effort to share community observances and stave off issues before they arise.

UMW has asked students to be diligent in wearing masks and social-distancing, with gatherings limited to groups of no more than 10. An intricate system of checks and balances – including an Eagle Care Ambassadors program that asks students to monitor each other’s behavior – helps keep them accountable, and administrators have made it clear that the guidelines apply beyond campus boundaries.

While Fredericksburg Police are not in a position to enforce UMW policy, officers are charged with monitoring activity within city limits according to public safety recommendations issued by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, and can issue reminders of University protocol.

“Our goal,” Jones said, “is to publicize this ongoing effort as a means to help reinforce positive behaviors for COVID-19 safety downtown.”

For more information about the City of Fredericksburg’s Covid-19 safety efforts, please visit www.Fredericksburgva.gov or call 540-372-1010.

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