

Paterson Residence Hall centralizes COVID-19 response efforts on the uptown campus

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fdawson@tulane.edu



In addition to serving as an isolation and quarantine space, the Paterson Residence Hall is the university's uptown COVID-19 testing location and the home of the contact tracing team. Student Shijie Wu self-administers a test in the residence hall's lobby under the observation of nurse Lana Carter. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Paterson Residence Hall will play an important role in the university's efforts to minimize the spread of COVID-19. As the university returns to on-ground operations, it will serve as an isolation and quarantine space, the university's uptown testing location and the home of the Tulane contact tracing team.

The site is ideal for promoting physical distancing and facilitating controlled traffic flow. For instance, testing will take place in Paterson's spacious lobby, but students who arrive for quarantine will have a different access point.

Paterson has "separate spaces that don't require people to interact or cross paths," said Scott Tims, assistant vice president for Campus Health.

Paterson has 62 rooms, many with single bathrooms. During their stay, students will have access to wireless internet, food delivery from Dining Services, and the support of Campus Health staff, who will check on them daily and even make overnight rounds to offer assistance.

Tims noted that the students who quarantine or self-isolate there will be asymptomatic or only mildly ill. "These students who would be staying there are able to take care of themselves and are not in need of medical intervention," he said. "These [rooms] are for students who have mild cases of COVID who just need a place to not infect other people."

Students at Paterson won't be totally cut off, though. Aside from attending classes remotely, they will be able to receive, with the help of their dorm roommates and the Campus Health staff, occasional deliveries such as supplies from the dorm room or the bookstore.

Faculty, staff and students will begin testing at Paterson in August. COVID-19 testing is part of Campus Health's multifaceted program to help the Tulane community familiarize themselves with the onset of symptoms and to establish better habits, such as sanitizing their environments and "masking up."

Masks will be distributed to all Tulanians and extras will be available, but Tims encourages Tulanians to plan ahead in case the mask breaks or gets left behind.

"I think it's really important for people to have a backup, to have that personal plan for their mask, so that they always have one," he said.