COVID-19 Dashboard gets an 'A' rating from Yale professors

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Ashli Olson, lab technician at the School of Medicine, runs COVID-19 test samples in the school's lab. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Tulane's recently launched COVID-19 Dashboard received an "A" rating from the Twitter account We Rate COVID Dashboards (@CovidDashboards).

The Twitter account debuted last month and is managed by two Yale University School of Medicine professors who review and evaluate dashboards that track COVID-19 testing and active cases across university campuses.

"We are initiating coverage for @Tulane with an A!" the rating post read. "Roll Wave, indeed. We cheer you on."

In an effort to encourage transparency about college COVID-19 testing programs, We Rate COVID Dashboards uses a 13-point grading system based on best practices and current information.

Tulane's "A" rating is the equivalent to 10-11 out of the total 13 points. (No university dashboard has achieved all 13 points so far). The account evaluates factors such as presentation/ease of reading, campus data vs. community data, and testing strategy and lag time.

Tulane's COVID-19 testing program has been successful at identifying and isolating individuals who are at risk of spreading the illness.

"The great majority of those who have tested positive were asymptomatic at the time, or experiencing mild symptoms, and the infections would likely not have been found without our aggressive asymptomatic screening," wrote President Mike Fitts in an email to the university community last Friday.

The Tulane COVID-19 Dashboard was launched on Sept. 4 and shares results starting on July 28, 2020, when the university's community surveillance program was started. It is updated daily and includes the total tests administered to faculty, staff and students, number of cumulative positive tests vs. active cases, daily testing results, and comparisons to state and local positivity rates. So far, Tulane has conducted more than 28,000 tests, with a cumulative positivity rate of 1.6%, and a 7-day average positivity rate of 1.8%, which is lower than the citywide percentage of 2.5%.

"It has been a team effort to overcome the challenges of capturing information from multiple data sources, but we are committed to sharing key indicators with our community," said Jessica Shedd, Assistant Provost for Assessment and Institutional Research.