Greetings IFC and NPC Tulane Greek Community,

How are you? I hope you made it safely through the storm, please let us know if you need anything. After 6 storms passed us by, the seventh did not make the same choice. I am so sorry for the continued challenges of this semester.

With only a month left of our time together before you leave for Thanksgiving, finals, and a much-deserved break, it is amazing to me how much has happened in these 10 weeks. Since classes started on August 19, you have created new ways of being together. Specifically, you have designed new recruitment strategies, hosted virtual meetings, and created innovative programs to support and connect with each other. I am incredibly impressed with your creativity and innovation in reimagining Greek Groove. Congratulations for your comprehensive educational, informative, local investment, and your flexibility in rescheduling it to make sure the hurricane doesn’t stop your dancing and fundraising!

As fraternity and sorority chapters grounded in high ideals and oaths of fellowship, I am grateful to you for taking care of each other this semester. And yet, that is not our full story. Our full story includes the fact that since August 19, a greater percentage of fraternity and sorority members have been impacted by COVID than the larger Tulane undergraduate population. In addition, our positivity rates are vastly different across chapters, telling a story of different choices and priorities chapters are making.

This is deeply concerning to me – for your health, for the health of your friends, and the health of our Tulane and New Orleans community. I wonder how you interpret this information – I would love to talk with anyone who has ideas, solutions, ways forward – because not only do we have 4 weeks left, we have an entire spring semester to either lead our way forward or live up to the low expectations often placed upon us. For me, it is a story of the pandemic – but it is also a story of our community’s individual and collective choices to not take greater care of each other.

As we close out the next four weeks, I ask us to do better. I ask you how I can help you do better? I want you to be able to go home, eat Thanksgiving with your family and take finals feeling at your best. I don’t want you to be stuck for 2 weeks in quarantine or even worse be isolated because you have contracted the virus.

This weekend we have a chance to be our best or worst selves, post Halloween where do you want your chapter’s percentages to be? Based on your choices this weekend and resulting contact tracing, you and your friends may or may not be stuck in quarantine or isolation for Thanksgiving. So, if the rules or other’s health don’t matter to you, maybe making your flight does, or your desire to eat and actually taste turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, pecan pie, [insert your favorite family dish here]. Please hold yourself, your friends, folks you don’t even know, accountable to our collective health. Each of you has a much-deserved right to end the semester healthy and get home to family to celebrate your achievements within a semester of multiple challenges.

While we have all worn masks for months, and many of you may have joined me in also eating candy for months, I wish you a candy-full, masked-up safe Halloween. And in the spirit of the holiday and our history of good and
bad costume choices, if any of your friends need costume ideas or reminders of what not to wear – here is a helpful article you can share: [Simple Guide by Bustle](#).

In closing I repeat my offers within this letter, if you have ideas on how I/we/collectively can better support our community’s leadership and practice of our own ideals within this COVID world, please reach out, I would love to talk and learn from you.

In fellowship,

Laura Osteen, Ph.D.
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