

Dear Student,

Sadly, it has happened again—a group of students flagrantly flouted the rules over the weekend. It has become clear that a relatively small but highly visible subsection of the student population in the Amherst area feels entitled to break the agreed-upon policies and rules so they can party, with no regard for the health and safety of their peers. This selfish and disrespectful attitude contributes to the spread of the virus and puts all of us at risk. To that end, I feel it is important to update you on actions being taken by the university.

**What Occurred:** On Saturday afternoon, the Amherst Police Department was called by local residents to disperse a crowd of about 200 students who had gathered in violation of university policy, town expectations, and state public health mandates. The crowd of mostly unmasked individuals was dispersed and citations were issued to the hosts.

**What Happens Next:** Those students identified as being involved—hosting or attending—will be issued an interim suspension. If a student also lives on campus, they will face the additional consequence of an interim housing restriction (which requires moving out of the halls) as they pose an immediate health risk to other residents.

Our **Student Conduct & Community Standards** staff has received nearly 1000 referrals since the beginning of the year; the vast majority of these are violations of the Interim Pandemic Policy. Due to the risks inherent in unregulated social gatherings and because students have been notified on numerous occasions of the expectations—this behavior is clearly an egregious violation of university policy and swift action is essential. We will continue to adjudicate future cases in this manner, and we will expedite the most blatant violations, such as those that occurred this weekend.

All students involved will have their appropriate due process, but under no circumstances will they continue as a university student in the interim. The actions of these haughty few are not representative of the larger student population who consistently demonstrate their commitment to public safety. This incident (and others like it) will be dealt with swiftly and effectively so those of you abiding by the rules can enjoy more university privileges.

I regret this is where we have arrived, but the university must act to support the needs and wants of the greater student body and the larger community. Thank you to those that have diligently followed the rules—*I want you to feel seen and appreciated*. I hope the good actors of the student body understand this approach as a supportive effort for a successful semester ahead.

Sincerely,

**Brandi Hephner LaBanc**

**Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life**