

# Virus situation calming down at Lehigh: “it seems like no one is (at Lehigh) anymore”

The Bethlehem Gadfly coronavirus, Lehigh University October 22, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus 

*“Cases have since dropped after an initial spike two weeks ago. According to Lehigh’s dashboard, active cases dropped from 82 to 36 in less than one week.”*

*Brown and White*

## Lehigh University COVID-19 Information Center

### Lehigh University COVID-19 dashboard

After a significant spike, the virus situation is calming down at Lehigh. The Brown and White article below gives some student reaction to the quality of life on campus these days.

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*Selections from Aliza Lev, “239 on-campus students have vacated university housing as of Oct. 21.” Brown and White, October 21, 2020.”*

Of the 1,223 students living on campus at the start of the semester, the majority — over 1,000 — are first-years students. That means about one-fifth of all first-year students living on campus have left housing either temporarily or permanently.

However, there are also 81 Gryphons [student Residence Hall advisors] currently living in university housing. Some of these Gryphons have left campus for the semester and gave up their positions or are considering doing so, according to a Gryphon who requested to remain anonymous in this article for fear of their job security.

The Gryphon said this has been a stressful semester for all Gryphons due to COVID-19 concerns and uncertainties. The anonymous Gryphon is considering not returning to campus next semester and resigning from her position.

“I’ve definitely been very stressed out and anxious over this,” the Gryphon said. “I’m thinking I should go home, but I’m nervous about getting sick and bringing (COVID-19) back to my high-risk parents. I’m torn between staying here or going home and leaving things uncertain about whether I’ll be able to be a Gryphon next semester.”

The Gryphon said other Gryphons have been concerned about the well-being of the first-years that live in their halls. The Gryphon said COVID-19 restrictions have made it difficult for first-year students to make friends, and many of them spend their time alone.

The Gryphon also said while some first-years prioritize their safety, others have not been adhering to COVID-19 guidelines for the sake of social interaction, which puts both themselves and their Gryphons at risk.

“It’s concerning seeing some kids who do care a lot wanting to stay on campus and stay safe, and other kids parading out of the building getting ready to go to parties,” the Gryphon said.

The Gryphon said there is frustration with the lack of communication between the Lehigh administration and the Residence Life staff because it has put Gryphons and other staff members at risk.

For example, the Gryphon said other Gryphons are only notified when someone on their own floor tests positive or residents need to quarantine. But when Gryphons are doing their typical “rounds” checking in on other floors in their residence hall, they could potentially be walking into a hall under quarantine and thus exposing themselves since they are not notified of positive students in halls other than their own.

Amy Zage, ‘24, and Paige Nemet, ‘24, were both exposed to COVID-19 on campus and were quarantined until they received their test results. After they each tested negative twice, Zage and Nemet went home.

Zage said she left campus because she felt scared and restricted living in her dorm.

Earlier this month, several students received letters of interim suspension after allegedly violating the university’s COVID-19 guidelines. Zage said she feared suspension and felt more comfortable temporarily living at home.

Nemet said she felt stressed before leaving campus because the university was not communicating about her situation. She said she called the Health Center multiple times with questions about her quarantine before getting in touch with someone.

“This was definitely stressful and difficult because I found out in only a day that I would have to quarantine for two weeks,” Nemet said. “Now everyone is either quarantined or at home, so it seems like no one is (at Lehigh) anymore.”

Zage also said the limited access to campus facilities, such as the libraries, significantly decreased her ability to interact with other students and maintain some form of social interaction.