



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

November 15, 2021

Dear Prospective Students and Families of the Spring 2022 Rome semester,

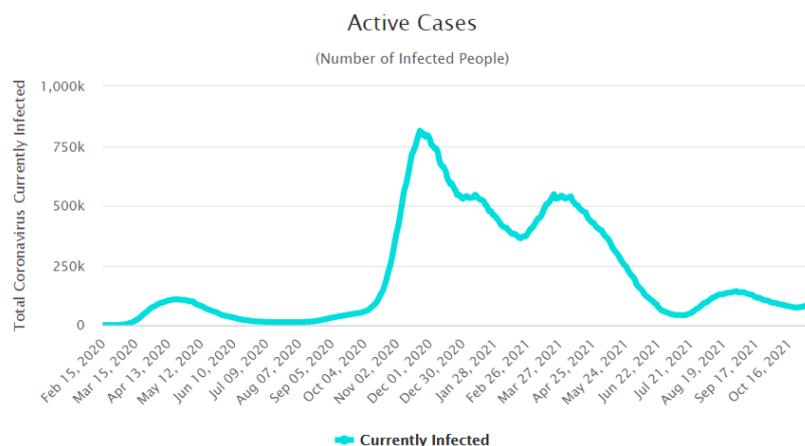
Greetings from the University of Dallas Eugene Constantin "Due Santi" Rome Campus. My name is Peter Hatlie, and I am the Dean, Director, VP and Professor of Classics in the UD Rome Program. I hope that this letter finds you in good health and good spirits wherever you may be.

I am happy to report that we are enjoying a really wonderful fall 2021 semester. All three big educational trips – to Pompeii, Paestum and the Amalfi coast in southern Italy, to Assisi, Florence and Venice in central and northern Italy, and all across Greece – are now complete and indeed were really excellent. Students have successfully completed their fall break travels, too, a break that took them to places such as Vienna, Krakow, London, Barcelona, Paris and beyond. As of this week we are back in classes and preparing for the men's and women's religious retreats this coming weekend, for President Jonathan J. Sanford's visit to campus next week, and for our Thanksgiving Day break toward the end of the month. All things considered, it would be safe to say that faculty, staff and students have been burning the candle at both ends in these first couple of months of the semester. That's another way of saying that our Due Santi community is busy and thriving, just as they should be after two months of so much enriching activity in and out of the classroom.

With this letter I would like to begin to prepare you for your own much anticipated Rome Semester by providing current information about the COVID-19 situation in Italy and Europe. In addition, this letter will give you some practical information about your preparations for Rome in light of current COVID-19 requirements and guidelines.

CURRENT COVID-19 NUMBERS IN ITALY AND EUROPE

As you can see from the graph below, COVID-19 cases in Italy are fairly low and stable at the moment:



A year ago, at this time Italy was in considerable trouble as COVID-19 cases spiked across the country causing most of Italy to shut down from November right through Christmas. By contrast, Italy now stands out among developed countries for its steadily low numbers of positive cases, people in hospitals, daily deaths, and COVID-19 positivity rates. Whereas the positive rate in much of the USA remains in the 7%

range, for example, in Italy it has hovered between 1% and 2% for several months now. Most of Europe, with the exception of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, are seeing similar low and stable COVID-19 values as well. So, the big picture here as far as COVID-19 goes is not perfect but certainly stable and fairly encouraging considering that winter is upon us and people are spending much more time indoors. High vaccination rates are certainly to be credited for this turnaround over the last year. Over 76% of the entire adult population is fully vaccinated in Italy, one of the highest per capita rates both in the world and among a tightly packed field of other highly vaccinated countries in Europe.

CURRENT AND EXPECTED COVID-19 CONTAINMENT MEASURES IN ITALY AND EUROPE

Italy has been under a state of COVID-19 emergency from March 2020 to this very day. During that time two successive prime ministers have adopted and maintained some of the most stringent COVID-19 containment measures in the whole world. A concern for saving human lives, protecting emergency care workers from occupational hazard, and defeating the virus as soon as possible has driven (and continues to drive) these policies. A majority of Italians (over 80%) support the government's pro-active approach to containing COVID-19, hoping that such policies will bring the country back to a sense of normalcy sooner than later, while a minority (less than 20%) remains either against or unsure on either economic, liberty, or other grounds.

The basic measures in place currently include:

- Required mask wearing indoors, everywhere except in one's household.
- Required social distancing at 1m (3ft), everywhere except in one's household.
- Required possession of a so-called *Green Pass*

The cornerstone of current policy in both Italy and the EU is the *Green Pass*, which is required for (a) entrance into Italy and other EU countries' borders, (b) access to most forms of public and private transportation across the EU, and (c) access to practically all private and public buildings, institutions, services, etc., including shops, offices, schools, bars and restaurants, sporting establishments and museums but not including houses of worship. One qualifies for the *Green Pass* by presenting one of the following documents upon demand:

- A COVID-19 vaccination certificate for one of the vaccinations recognized by the [European Medicines Agency](#) (EMA), such as Pfizer-BioNtech, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson, or AstraZeneca. The date of the final vaccine dose must be at least 14 days prior to travel. Approved languages of the certificate are Italian, English, Spanish, and French. The certificate can be in digital or paper format. Travelers vaccinated in the United States can prove this via the CDC "White Card". Vaccinations are valid for up to twelve (12) months after the last dose.
- A medical certificate from a medical professional, translated into Italian by an authorized translator, confirming recovery from COVID. This certificate is valid for up to nine (9) months after the initial date of infection.
- A negative molecular PCR or rapid antigen test result carried out within 36 hours of access to any site or service requiring a *Green Pass*.

The state of emergency is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2021. When and if it does, however, it is unlikely that all containment measures will be lifted. Indeed, it is highly likely that the three provisions outlined above – masking, social distancing, and the *Green Pass* requirements – will stay in place well into 2022 and thus into the spring 2022 semester.

Given the likelihood of these requirements staying in place well beyond December 31, 2021, all participants of the spring 2022 semester are therefore advised of the need to comply with all of the above measures as a precondition for attending the spring semester and in particular take steps to fulfill the requirements of the *Green Pass*. Note please that the University has elected to exclude the option of obtaining the *Green Pass* through testing alone on the grounds that such testing would need to be frequent (every three days for almost four months), is not always easily obtainable, is expensive, and would likely prove disruptive if not debilitating to our academic and travel programs.

For a summary of the policies reviewed in the above discussion, see the University's [Rome Campus COVID-19 page](#). For a broader and more detailed vision of COVID-19 containment policies in the Italy and the EU, see [Re-open EU](#) (an EU site) and [Alerts and Messages - U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Italy](#).

PROS AND CONS OF COVID-19 CONTAINMENT MEASURES IN ITALY AND EUROPE

We understand that some of our prospective students and their family members may be uncertain about or even against obtaining a vaccination in order to obtain the *Green Pass* and thus be eligible for participation in the Rome Program. We respect your choice and will regret the absence of any and all students who find themselves in this situation. At the same time, we are obliged to follow Italian/EU guidelines and will continue to do our part to contain and combat COVID-19 in compliance with current and future laws, whatever they may be. More generally, too, the safety and well-being of our students and staff, followed by the successful implementation of our academic and religious-life programs, remain our highest priorities. Given the record of this fall, we fully expect that our spring 2022 students will enjoy the very same benefits our current group of students are enjoying.

RISKS AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

Our policy in past "COVID semesters" was to make campus health and safety our highest priority. That policy is in effect in fall 2021 and will continue unchanged into spring 2022 and beyond, first because it is the right thing to do, and second because it is the cornerstone of all of our other aspirations in Rome in academic, religious, and student-life terms. Keeping this perspective in mind, students, their parents, and their loved ones are advised to read the following warnings and notices with attention:

- **Possible Program Changes Owing to the COVID-19 virus:** Although we all long for a return to the stable and predictable times of old, this expectation seems unrealistic until every last trace of COVID-19 is erased worldwide. That will not happen anytime soon, as we all know, not in the next several months certainly and perhaps not for some years to come. All Rome participants therefore need to acknowledge that a new outbreak of COVID-19 in Italy and elsewhere is a possibility, without of course being a probability. Given this possibility, we reserve the right to change our planning, even last minute, in response to a renewed international health emergency that would compromise the safety of the Rome Campus community.
- **Contracting COVID in Rome:** Students, their parents, and their friends and loved ones need to accept that contracting COVID is still a possibility during the Rome semester. The Rome Campus has engaged a certified safety-in-the-workplace expert to help us identify and implement all necessary and reasonable anti-COVID measures. It also relies on UD Irving's well-founded policies. But even if we are confident in our ability to limit—to a significant degree—the risk of infection on campus, we are not in a position to monitor the lives of all of the people in our community 24/7 nor dictate each person's behavior outside of campus. As noted above, we have also not mandated vaccinations for Rome participants. Hence, there are some limitations in our ability to manage this health challenge, and as a result some level of risk is unavoidable and remains outside our absolute control. Despite performing due diligence

in regard to keeping the campus free of COVID, therefore, the University of Dallas and its Rome Campus still cannot in absolute terms promise that a student will not contract COVID during his/her Rome semester nor will the University and its Rome Campus take legal responsibility if that unfortunate circumstance occurs. Parents and students acknowledge the risks they are taking by participating in the Rome program, assume full responsibility for these risks, and agree not to hold the University liable in the event that a student contracts the COVID virus while in the Rome program.

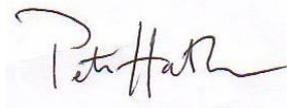
NEXT STEPS

To conclude, let me thank all students and their loved ones for your continued interest and support of the Rome Program. We truly hope that as many students as possible will be able to experience both the riches of our Program and the amazing travel opportunities available this spring. If this coming spring does not work out for you, then please consider our undergraduate programs in summer 2022, fall 2022, and spring 2023. Let us hope, too, that by that time COVID-19 will be but a distant memory and all the risks and restrictions of today will be long gone.

If you have questions about any aspect of this letter, want to discuss your options further, or have more general questions about the spring 2022 semester, please contact Rebecca Davies, the Director of the Rome Office in Irving by phone at (972) 721-5206 or email at bdavies@udallas.edu. If you prefer to contact me on the Rome Campus, I will respond promptly to email delivered at phatlie@udallas.edu and will be happy to follow up with a call too.

Please expect another communication from us around mid-December, both to update you as necessary on some of the issues discussed in this letter and discuss your pre-arrival planning. We will follow that communication with a Zoom town-hall meeting in early January to field last minute concerns and questions.

Sincerely Yours,



Peter Hatlie, Dean, Director, VP, Prof. of Classics