



In light of the recent rise in COVID-19 cases within the University of Virginia community, the University Judiciary Committee (UJC) issues the following statement.

First, the UJC extends our deepest gratitude to local health care personnel and UVa staff members who continue to work tirelessly to keep our community afloat amid the dramatic rise in student cases coupled with inclement weather. The beginning of this semester has been more challenging than usual, and we are grateful for the support they, and thousands of other community members, have given to the University community during this time. We also recognize that this spike of COVID-19 cases does not affect every part of our community equally. Student cases bleed into the Charlottesville community, hurting Charlottesville residents and disproportionality affecting BIPOC communities.

We acknowledge that inadequate oversight by University administration as well as the poor decision-making of specific students and student groups have directly negatively impacted our community.

The [mission](#) of the UJC is to promote a community of respect, safety, and freedom. That community is not contained to Grounds nor should it be. As UVa students, we are guests in the Charlottesville community and ought to treat it with the respect we treat our peers and keep Charlottesville residents safe just as we keep one another safe. While the UJC supports students' freedom, we do not support University students putting one another, and the Charlottesville community, at risk by making decisions that undermine community health and safety. Freedom is not an excuse to violate University policy nor a justification for putting any person in harm's way. With freedom comes responsibility, and right now, our utmost responsibility is to protect ourselves and others from spreading and/or contracting COVID-19.

We also acknowledge that there exists a narrative that encourages students to police one another through community reporting and that pushes the responsibility for outbreaks to the students alone. Let us be clear: the UJC does not seek to burden students by requiring them to self-police. The UJC is not a group that encourages self-policing nor supports any authorization of increased police presence on Grounds. Rather, we adjudicate alleged violations that come before us, and can *only* adjudicate such cases if they are reported or referred directly to the UJC.

The UJC is an agency organization of the University, but we are not administration. We are entirely composed of students and represent each of the 13 schools of the University. We do not make or provide input on University policy, nor were we ever present in any discussion to shape or amend these policies. Our role is to ensure that no student is found guilty of the [12 Standards of Conduct](#) or sanctioned until they have had the opportunity for a trial before their peers. And as student leaders, we face an immense challenge: while we adjudicate matters involving the student body, we do not monitor or police the entire community. We recognize that many students want the University to hold those who endanger our community accountable, and we are committed to evaluating every case that comes before the UJC.

Nevertheless, the UJC cannot hear cases unless they are reported to us. We can hear cases that are mostly reported to us by UVa administration, students, and community members. In full transparency, at this time, UVa administration is not reporting cases at the rate we would expect, which leaves a greater burden on students to report if they seek to hold their peers accountable. We encourage any student who would like to speak with, report to, or ask questions of the UJC to always feel free to reach out to us.

Like any semester, we recognize that not all reports to UVa administration will come to the UJC for adjudication. We share the frustration that some infractions against the community go unnoticed or unreported, even though their effects may be devastating. That being said, individual students and community members who have specific information regarding potential policy violations can report their concerns at any time — to administration or directly to the UJC — at the following sites:

- **UVa Reporting Resources: compliance.virginia.edu/reporting-resources**
 - Your complaint will be reviewed by **University officials**.
 - Depending on your report, the administration may or may not refer the case to the UJC.
- **UJC Complaint: ujcpublicprod.azurewebsites.net**
 - Your complaint will be reviewed by **students on the UJC**.
 - You may be expected to dedicate time to serve as Complainant in a proceeding.
 - Although we cannot guarantee that every complaint has enough evidence to proceed to adjudication, we will respond to every complaint filed.

You do not need to have photographic or video evidence of a violation to file a report. Complainants in the past have successfully brought cases with nothing but eyewitness testimony. If you are yourself (or you know of) a witness to a Standard of Conduct violation who is willing to go on the record and testify in a case, that is important evidence in its own right.

Finally, we are concerned first and foremost with stopping the spread of COVID-19 and keeping the University and Charlottesville communities safe. We encourage students to limit exposure by adhering to all social distancing, masking, and safety guidelines set by the University and the Commonwealth of Virginia. We also ask that all students get tested weekly and cooperate fully and truthfully with contact tracing, as it is always the right thing to do. The UJC does not, and will never, use information from these processes for disciplinary purposes.

We empathize with the stress and despair felt by all students given further restrictions and the high prevalence of the virus at the University—we feel it too. And we join you in hoping for a quick and effective resolution to the current outbreak. We are always here to listen to your concerns and ideas about how we might better serve our community and support students. All contact information for the UJC Executive Committee members and for the elected UJC Representatives for your particular school, along with other information about the UJC process, can be found at ujc.virginia.edu. The Committee thanks you for reading this letter and hopes that you stay safe and healthy at all times. If you have any questions, suggestions, or any comments about our processes, we are happy to speak with you.

For the Committee and the community,
The University Judiciary Committee