

opinion

Student compliance to Covid-19 policy is sub-par

SEAN REPUYAN
Reporter

Ashland University has made it clear that the goal of a safe and healthy academic year throughout the coronavirus pandemic is envisioned by the “Stronger Together, Safer Together” initiative. This initiative has set in place protocol and guidelines to be followed by all students, faculty and staff in and around campus.

These guidelines are meant to help ensure proper social distancing and the health and safety of the community: reducing the number of seating in classrooms, following floor markings and tape throughout social/dining areas, placing limitations on group gatherings, and wearing masks around campus and in all buildings. Although Ashland plans for its students to stay on campus as long as they can, the university’s enforcement of these guidelines hasn’t been well-received.

It is obvious that being able to socially distance in a tight space, such as an elevator, can be difficult. In order to combat this, Ashland has made it so that there can be no more than two people in one elevator at a time. As someone who is not a fan of a crowded elevator, this guideline came natural to me.

However, many students are starting to ignore some, if not, all guidelines for COVID protocol. Which is not difficult since Ashland’s enforcement of said protocol has not been meeting the standards that should be met. It seems that many of the students, faculty and staff are entirely over the pandemic and feel above it.

There have been many times in my dorm hall, where other students will crowd in the elevator with me, most not even acknowledging the protocol or asking for consent to have more than two. In dorms, students are only allowed one guest per person living in

the room, however, on multiple occasions, I have seen more than the allotted people gathering in the same or different dorms. Not only is this activity risking the health of the campus, these gatherings can generate unnecessary noise, making those in and around the dorm building find difficulty focusing and studying.

The dining halls have had the most changes done. Seating has been spaced out and the number of seats has been split in half, access to self-serve items has been removed, and lines have been adjusted to account for six-foot spacing. Even though chairs

are clearly spaced out, students will still drag multiple chairs to tables that would normally only fit about five people. Along with this, those dining do not wear their masks as often as they should-- although masks are allowed to be taken off to eat or drink, many people will leave their mask off around the entirety of the dining area.

Even those who wear their masks do not properly wear them. People have different ideas about what is safe or smart or the best way to approach this pandemic, and others do not understand the best way to approach this pandemic seriously and appropriately. I

genuinely do not understand what is so difficult about wearing a mask around a group of people. Some people do have medical issues like asthma which can conflict with wearing a mask. However, most people I have talked to about wearing their masks said simply that they “just don’t want to.”

It seems to me that since there have been so many changes done, that those enforcing it cannot even keep up with their own protocol. The execution of Ashland’s response to COVID and the protocol they set in place has been sloppy and unordered, contradicting the smooth transition to normalcy the university was hoping for.

Even the lines set in place for social distancing are sloppy-- particularly the Grubhub pick-up window at Eagle’s Nest. Orders at the window pile up, forcing students to jumble together to get their orders.

I do not believe Ashland is trying its hardest to keep students on campus, nor do I believe that students are following enough rules to stay on campus. Ashland University says that we are taking COVID seriously and taking every precaution to ensure the health and safety of every student, faculty and staff member, however I just do not see that commitment from either side.

Both sides of the equation are not doing their part, making the possibility of staying on campus start to become smaller and smaller. All on-campus students say that they do not want to have to go home and continue with remote instruction online. However, these same students will not follow these simple guidelines designed to keep them on campus for as long as possible. In the end, if Ashland University and its students, faculty and staff want to remain on campus, these guidelines need to be enforced a lot more than they have been and students must learn to listen and follow them. Otherwise, what’s the point of going to college?



Residence hall bulletin board details COVID-19 regulations and policy on campus.

EVAN LAUX

High schools should not be playing fall sports

EVAN LAUX
News Editor

The coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly flipped my life upside down as it has with everyone else in the U.S. over the past six months. Uncertainty is the new norm and it seems as though aspects of our everyday lives are changing pretty much day to day. There’s very frequently new developments that change COVID protocol and how we react to the pandemic at hand.

States, cities, and counties to enact their own measures and laws to combat the virus depending on the severity they believe their area to be in. As coronavirus threat levels rise on county and state spread maps, policy gets increasingly more strict.

Growing COVID numbers have not deterred some organizations from making changes to their protocols and guidelines, however.

For example, early on in the pandemic cycle the fall school semester, at least in-person, wasn’t considered a possibility at all. After being sent home in the spring, the majority opinion I witnessed from my peers and administrators was that schools would not be held on-campus in the fall. A couple months later, colleges and high schools across the country were holding face-to-face classes.

I think this is fine, as long as these organi-

zations are maintaining proper protocol to mitigate the spread of the virus.

A more debated aspect of schooling during COVID, is whether or not sports teams were able to hit the field. Early on, like with face-to-face classes, there was little guarantee that sports would be played in the fall. And until recently, when the Big 10 was announced to return, most colleges were not competing in fall sports.

So then why are many high schools across the country still playing fall sports? In fact, professional leagues are the only sporting events that should be able to be conducted at this time in my opinion.

The reason why these institutions work is because the players devote their whole lives to the sport they compete in. The NBA is the best example of this. With the “bubble,” NBA players were placed inside the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Fla. All practices and games were held inside the resort, and players leaving the “bubble” would be required to quarantine at least 14 days and take a coronavirus test to reenter.

These players dedicate their entire lives to their sport, so they are capable of altering their day-to-day lives to continue competing while still following COVID protocol. Highschoolers and college students aren’t able to do this as they have classes and other commitments outside of their athletics.

That’s why college sports were, for the most part, postponed this season.

So it seems strange to me that high schools across the nation are still allowing students to participate in sports.

It angers me when I go on Snapchat and see stories posted by family members and friends in highschool that show students and athletes blatantly disregarding COVID guidelines. I’ve seen locker rooms stuffed with 30+ athletes with no masks on whatsoever.

These are students going home to their families every single day. If a college student gets coronavirus, they are most likely able to relocate to campus quarantine and isolation housing where they can safely deter themselves from contact with others.

Many highschoolers don’t have this privilege. If they do not have a severe case where hospitalization is required, they will be quarantined at home with risk of transmitting the virus to others.

Not to mention, high schoolers are still children. They may not understand the gravity of the pandemic as a whole, and how their actions can lead to severe consequences. It doesn’t help that in the rural area of central Ohio we live in, there are a vast majority of adults that are advocating anti-mask sentiments to their young and impressionable children.

But maybe the high schools I have specifically seen are just the minority, and the vast majority of high schools are following COVID regulation seriously with their athletics programs.

College athletic programs like AU are still practicing during this off-season, hopefully while wearing masks. They are unable to compete against other schools because under COVID regulation, it would be impossible to have venues open to full stands of spectators and packed gymnasium and fields of players, staff and coaches.

Without sizable audiences and fan support, athletic programs are unable to make and profit from their season.

For whatever reason however, I keep seeing pictures of packed high school football stadiums with swarms of family and friends without masks.

Maybe I’m just overthinking it, but it upsets me to see hard working college athletes losing their athletic seasons. It’s understandable though as taking a season off is the responsible thing to do in the nation’s current climate. It upsets me even more to see packed high school stadiums where athletes and their families are knowingly making it harder for us to get through this pandemic. It seems irresponsible for high school administrations to allow this.

the Collegian

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