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## After Only One Week, Chapel Hill Abandons In-Person Fall Semester

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2-3 minutes



Ted Richardson for The Washington Post, Getty Images

Freshmen this month at the U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on Monday suddenly pulled the plug on its in-person fall semester, bowing to concerns about rapidly spreading Covid-19 infection both on and off campus. The university said in a news release that it would flip all classes online and seek to further reduce density in its residence halls.

“Since launching the Roadmap for Fall 2020, we have emphasized that if we were faced with the need to change plans — take an off-ramp — we would not hesitate to do so, but we have not taken this decision lightly,” wrote Kevin Guskiewicz and Robert Blouin, the chancellor and the provost, respectively, in a message to the

campus. “We have made it in consultation with state and local health officials, Carolina’s infectious-disease experts, and the UNC system.”

UNC is the first state flagship to welcome students back to campus for the fall semester only to send them packing. Classes started on August 10.

The decision was made amid a quickly deteriorating public-health picture on campus. Just minutes before the announcement, the university [reported 135 new cases of Covid-19](#) in just the last week. It had previously announced the emergence of four clusters of infection — three in residence halls, one in a fraternity. In response, students and faculty members called on the university to cease in-person operations, a chorus that reached its peak early Monday, when the dean of the public-health school, Barbara K. Rimer, [urged Chapel Hill](#) to abandon its in-person plan.

“We have tried to make this work,” Rimer wrote, “but it is not working.”