

September 29, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I want to update you on my SARS COV-2 infection and COVID-19 status. I have no symptoms, I am shedding no infectious virus, and now I am immune for at least 3 months and may be up to three years.

I want to thank everyone who contacted me to wish me well. I also want to use my experience to do three things: keep trying to destigmatize this disease, dispel misinformation and remind you to be data informed.

Finding out you are positive makes you think about who you could have infected for the five days prior to your symptoms and, no matter how careful you have been, worry about the people (extremely few in my case) you need to contact. Early in the pandemic I was on the other side of the situation—I was contacted. At the time, I was fine about it. But the person's other contacts were not, and "friendships" were lost. Stigmatization is real and common.

To correct one unfounded rumor I was asked directly ("Was I infected when cavorting with gun-toting mask-less stakeholders in crowded rooms?"), I left campus on March 13, returned twice last spring to be videotaped outdoors for Commencement, and then on September 9 to be tested at Campus Health, who are doing an exemplary job. I am an avid mask-wearing, handwashing distancer. Biology is *always* probabilistic, and this pandemic plays by the rules. My movements were so limited that my epidemiology is simple and clear: I was either infected at my health care provider or at a supermarket and most likely by aerosol—as a COVID-experienced MD friend of mine said, "usual suspects".

Everything that followed, as you should expect, followed the math. My likelihood of having acute COVID symptoms was around 80%, I would almost certainly have mild symptoms, and I calculated my *worst-case* acute survival probability at greater than 99.95%, i.e. not dying of COVID, or even being very sick, would be the most likely outcome. My long-term health prospects are less clear, but the data again suggests an extreme likelihood of being just fine and dying someday *with* this experience and not *from* it. Please remember that everyone's probabilities are different, and I strongly encourage you to do all you can to stay uninfected and then take a safe vaccine when it becomes available. Please be an avid mask-wearing, handwashing distancer, too.

The Pima County contact tracing and support system were great. Others have shared with me their own experiences, and I now have a lot of anecdotal data about testing compliance as well as direct knowledge of very symptomatic people testing negative.

Many of you know I love Nike's "Just Do It." I want to reemphasize what I've said before many times during this pandemic – and have had to remind myself a lot these last months – just do what you can, the best you can, when you can.

We're all facing challenging circumstances. Your priority is to look after you and your family, and then move out from there. Please be mindful also that our students are stressed, strained and *very fed up*. They are not going anywhere. They are sticking with us as best they can. They still have their dreams, in fact more so, and so let's stick with them.

Provost Folks sent all faculty a memo on September 10, [outlining changes she is asking academic unit leaders to make for 2020 annual reviews](#) to recognize the extraordinary circumstances we have experienced this year. Your unit leaders have not just the authority, but also the responsibility, to decide how the annual review process works in the unit they lead, so long as it is consistent with UHAP [3.2/4A.2](#) and is done consistently for everybody. Staff career conversations are similar. I've asked all our division's supervisors to pragmatically embrace their autonomy and, when doing mandated annual reviews, take extraordinary measures consistent with our extraordinary circumstances.

In a related vein, some junior faculty have told me of their concerns that 2020 will adversely impact their promotion review, whether they are scheduled to go up this year or later. Just as I told you in early August that your job is safe this semester, I want to tell you today that there is no rationale for there being a significant difference this year, or in the years ahead, in the numbers of CALS or CES faculty being promoted and/or awarded a property right status.

Faculty promotion is primarily a *faculty governance* process. By far the biggest and most influential roles are those of your colleagues in your academic and/or CES unit faculty committees, as well as extramural faculty evaluators. Every faculty member in the world is going through this pandemic. Your productivity may have skyrocketed, but for others, every day has been a near-impossible challenge to just get through with their sanity intact. If you're serving on a peer review or promotion committee and this crisis has allowed you to be extra productive, please remember that many are struggling. We are all obligated to be equitable and fair and we all should be compassionate.

UA appointed administrators (unit heads, deans and the provost) only ensure *process integrity* and comment on the opinions of unit and college committees. I assure you that I and all other ALVSCE appointed administrators will review your dossier with this pandemic's effects in mind. I'll be looking specifically to ensure this happens.

Be courageous and afford courage.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shane".

Shane C. Burgess