

# Redditor who exposed manipulation of COVID-19 case graph by the University of Texas at Dallas speaks out

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*The International Workers Alliance of Rank and File Committees will be holding a webinar on October 24 with leading epidemiologists and scientists on how to end the Coronavirus pandemic. Sign up here.*

The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) has been caught manipulating its active case graph on its COVID-19 dashboard in an attempt to downplay the severity of the infections on campus.

Redditor u/nolightallnight exposed the glaring disparities between UTD's graph of active cases and the feasible active cases in a series of posts on UTD's unofficial Reddit page, and even put together a graph to illustrate this.

UTD reopened fully in person on August 23, with the result being at least 387 infections among students and staff. Before August 23, a total of 513 cases had been recorded among students and staff for the duration of the pandemic. That is, UTD recorded in less than two months into the school year three-quarters of the total infections for the whole duration of the pandemic before August 23. At least 900 total students and staff have been infected since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

The following is an interview with u/nolightallnight done on October 7.

Q: Could you detail the discrepancies and how you found out about them?

A: As far as the discrepancies, I noticed it at first because the graph once displayed 130+ active cases one day and suddenly displayed 60 cases the next day. I made a post about it that didn't get that much attention but 1-2 days later in the morning I decided to investigate a little deeper by plotting the COVID-19 text notifications and noticed that we had a LOT of

notifications near the start of the semester but almost nothing to show for it on the COVID-19 graph.

The isolation period days are all simulated counts of how many people would be sick, a more realistic graph would probably be all the cases having a distributed spread between say 12-16 days; but CDC orders a mandatory 14-day quarantine so I figured 14 days would be at least somewhat accurate.

Q: Why do you think they are hiding the data?

A: Let me start with I have NO PROOF that they are "hiding" data, but I can guarantee that they are hiding their mistakes; which they have admitted ARE mistakes as per Dr. [Rafael] Martin [vice president and chief of staff] on 9/27, not "technical difficulties" like the COVID-19 graph display would want you or any other students/parents/prospects to believe.

Data seems manipulated to me because the start of the semester was extremely important to UTD; deciding whether or not to remain in-person hinged upon the COVID-19 count, which worried students because they feared that they would not be able to pull out of housing contracts on campus. Surprise, surprise, they were not able to.

Another reason why I think they are hiding data is because of a graph posted by /u/UTDVPSA, a university official, showcasing just how different internal and external data is. For instance, on September 15, UTD found 16 positive COVID cases according to their internal data but only 10 are reflected in the text notifications. Examples like this are abundant, and especially more frequent toward the start of the semester. There is a constant disconnect between the amount of text notifications received and COVID-19 patients listed on their website, that only

appears drastically altered when they most needed it to.

Notice that the last day for housing contracts was September 2, I believe, and the cases suddenly start to rise on UTD's reported graph from September 5 onward.

Q: What do you think about the university's repudiation of de-densification (mitigation measures limiting the number of students in a classroom), all the while planning delivering the State of the University address in a pre-recorded online format?

A: /u/SG\_UTD, the verified UTD student government account, has a lot of good information regarding this as well as any correspondence to university officials on the COVID-19 graph. I think the university is beyond tone-deaf announcing the rollback, especially considering a /u/SG\_UTD survey showed that something like four out of five people think de-densification should stay or something more should be done.

Students also vented their frustration about it on a thread with almost the same exact-worded title as your question that has some good quotes too. To summarize though, we have no idea how UTD could decide to take precautions for their administrators all while forcing students into packed testing centers that do not enforce masks, do not enforce social distancing and do not clean common areas used by multiple people within a short timespan. ... the list goes on. They use one side of the argument to keep us on campus paying them for subpar living conditions and then use the other side of the argument to keep their administrators out of danger.

I guess the reason why it bothers me and many others is because of how transparent UTD was with screwing us over. We all saw it coming, begged for them not to, and then they still did. And wonder why we are mad.

Q: What do you think this says about the university? About the return to in-person schooling?

A: It says a lot, namely that decisions made by the university are based on financial models instead of human lives, which I think says a lot about a school that focuses so much on scientific and medical fields (that happen to cost a lot). We are just funds they wait to collect each summer/winter in preparation for the next 12 weeks.

It feels like they forgot that the university is a place of education instead of a corporation, like the pandemic is just a mild inconvenience for their business model.

It feels like we got left behind. And it feels like they waved us goodbye with a smirk until they faded out of view. And they would not have regretted it at all either, because no one would have cared, if only their graph was not filled to the brim with lies.

Q: The *World Socialist Web Site* calls for an eradication strategy towards the virus, that is, all the public health measures as deemed necessary by medical science in order to end the pandemic internationally and eradicate the virus, including the shutting down of non-essential businesses and in-person classes for the duration necessary, which now I think stands at around two months, along with public health measures such as a campaign on education on vaccination, and full pay for workers staying at home, among other measures detailed in our recent statement. What do you think of this strategy?

A: I think that at the very least we need some sort of proper mask enforcement, hybrid enrollment options, and vaccine requirements for school officials. I know this may apply more toward K12 education but under-12-year-olds cannot even get the vaccine, and some students are parts of families that are very close to each other all the time because of the huge number of students that do not live on campus. This is not over, this is not the flu, please think about your community instead of your comfort.



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