

August 13, 2021

COVID-19 Update: Masking Required Indoors on All TCSPP Campuses

Dear TCSPP Community,

As always, I hope my email finds you healthy and well.

For more than 16 months we have, together, navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and adapted graciously to the ever-changing landscape having patience with each other and extending kindness across our University as we do our very best to practically and optimistically move forward during these extraordinarily unpredictable times.

To all of our students reading this email, I am so pleased that you have been able to continue with your educational journey. You are juggling so much yet demonstrating resilience and grit as you keep your eye on your career goals. To all employees reading this email, thank you sincerely for the continued support and care you extend to our students, all the while juggling your own lives.

As the Fall Semester is now quickly approaching, I am writing to update you as we prepare to come back together on our campuses and to additionally share my thoughts on the decisions that are before us as a University.

Given the changing masking guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) premised on helping reduce the spread of COVID-19, while some campuses have already started mandating masks, **effective immediately, all faculty, staff, students, and visitors are required to wear masks in shared indoor spaces** regardless of vaccination status on all campuses. Our University-wide mandate comes in the wake of the recently revised recommendation by the CDC that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, should wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission, which includes all of our campus locations.

We are continuing to closely monitor guidance from the CDC, as well as all other federal, state, and local public health authorities, and we are using that guidance to shape our response to this ever-changing pandemic. Our University-wide Return to Campus Committee will continue to monitor current conditions across our University community and incorporate public health guidance to inform and revise

our campus planning and safety protocols. You can always access the latest information about your campus location's plan on the TCSPP Community Site or Employee Intranet.

We also continue to monitor the landscape and changing guidance around vaccine mandates. Through our ongoing consultations and deliberations and through my conversations with other leaders in higher education, I know there are no "easy" decisions here: deciding whether to mandate the vaccine for our community comes with benefits and drawbacks for everyone. As a University, we continue to prioritize the guidance from the CDC to shape our response. As that guidance evolves, so too will our response.

As I shared at the end of June 2021, TCSPP is not currently mandating the COVID-19 vaccine for students, faculty, and staff who are returning to in-person, on-ground locations in Fall 2021. That being said, I want to reiterate that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and openly available across the United States. TCSPP strongly encourages all students, faculty, and staff to get vaccinated as quickly as possible if they are able. We are aware many of our students are engaged at training sites that are mandating vaccination to be on site. We continue to monitor through academic advising and student support our students' response to this training requirement.

As a community, we are extremely excited to welcome students back to our ground campuses this fall. Thank you for your continued flexibility, cooperation, and patience as we work together to help protect our communities from this changing pandemic. With each hurdle of this pandemic, our campus community grows stronger.

Warm Regards,
Michele Nealon, Psy.D.
President

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