

Subject: Dean's Update
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 at 5:08:08 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: CFAES Office of the Vice President and Dean
To: cfaes-all@lists.osu.edu
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png, image006.png, image007.png, image008.png

CFAES Community,

I wanted to call your attention to the email below, that the provost sent out earlier today, with guidance for faculty but implications for all of us. Please familiarize yourself with the information. Within our college, we know you have been asked to address many unique challenges with the pandemic and we appreciate your focus to help uphold our student-first philosophy and our land grant mission. The coming semester is starting with uncertainty, as well as continued challenges and procedures to keep everyone safe which require additional efforts. These efforts can also bring added stress and we encourage you to take care of yourselves and others around you.

And, as much as we appreciate your commitment to our philosophy and mission, our expectations should not come at the expense of your mental wellness or in balancing with your personal commitments. That balance feels difficult to achieve in this middle of this COVID surge, but I support you working with your supervisor to find appropriate ways to make you and your work sustainable during this time.

As we prepare to begin the semester the CFAES Operations team is making available a limited number of N95 respirators for employee use. These respirators are more fitted than the traditional surgical or cloth masks that have been worn up to this point in the pandemic. This enhanced respiratory protection is voluntary for individuals as an additional safety choice based on their work. A supply of N95s will be available in:

- Columbus (Academic Programs Office, Room 100 in Agricultural Administration)
- Wooster (Facilities Operations Storeroom)

Departmental offices can also request a small supply to have available.

CFAES Safety recommends employees continue to be vigilant in terms of sanitization. Facilities and FOD continue to perform routine cleaning of spaces and stocking of hand sanitizer stations in buildings.

As the situation continues to remain fluid, we request that staff and faculty continue to check the OSU Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site <https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu> as well as the CFAES Safety web page <https://cfaesafety.osu.edu>.

Be well.

Dean Cathann Kress

Dean Cathann A. Kress, Ph.D.

Vice President for Agricultural Administration & Dean

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

140 Ag Administration | [2120 Fyffe Road](https://www.osu.edu/2120-fyffe-road) | [Columbus, OH 43210](https://www.osu.edu/columbus)

614-292-6164 Office

kress.98@osu.edu

Twitter: @cathannkress



OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Melissa L. Gilliam
Executive Vice President and Provost

Dear Colleagues,

As we embark on a new semester and continue to live through the pandemic, I wanted to reiterate important information from [President Johnson's Tuesday message](#) and provide additional guidance on resources available to you.

We look forward to welcoming students back to our campuses this weekend for the start of classes on Jan. 10, and we are mindful at the same time of the public health situation across Ohio. Our goal is to provide the highest quality education for students while taking steps to protect the health and well-being of our campus community. Please understand that given the rapidly changing circumstances, we all must remain flexible and adaptable, as university guidance may shift often or suddenly.

To maintain the health and safety of our campus, we will ask students to test

upon arrival and provide weekly screening. Given this reality, all teaching faculty members should have a plan if adjustments are needed for circumstances such as:

- If students need to miss class because they are sick, in isolation or quarantine.
- If you or your graduate teaching associates are unable to teach or cannot teach in person because of isolation or quarantine.
- And if conditions change, and your class needs to be taught in a hybrid or virtual mode.

We will continue to be vigilant about health measures and adapt our strategy as needed during the spring semester. I will strive to provide you with up-to-date information, and the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes](#) website is continually updated to reflect Ohio State's COVID-19 response.

HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Please work with students to help them navigate your class if they are impacted by COVID-19. Students, faculty and staff should stay home if they are feeling sick and take additional steps if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Some students, including those assigned to isolation or quarantine, will request formal and informal accommodations because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Regarding accommodations:

- Students who test positive should forward a statement of support for short-term academic flexibility to you. If they test at a university testing facility, they will automatically receive this statement. Students who test positive at other testing facilities can work with Student Life Disability Services to acquire the statement of support.
- [Student Life Disability Services](#) is the primary resource on campus for students and instructors when students are faced with significant COVID-19 impacts or approved disability accommodations.
- Faculty who need resources on how to obtain technology for virtual engagement should contact [Classroom Services](#).

Other possible strategies to support students who are affected by COVID-19:

- Provide the opportunity to make up missed exams and/or have exams conducted via Carmen
- Have students volunteer to record classes for peers who are in quarantine or isolation, out sick, or taking a personal day from class
- Help your students build a buddy system, where students zoom their buddy into class so they don't have to be absent
- Consider offering equivalent work that could be offered for missing class so students don't get penalized for missing class due to illness

OTHER CLASSROOM GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

You cannot change the overall delivery mode of the course you are teaching without the formal approval of the College's academic leadership and the Office of Academic Affairs. If issues emerge with the delivery mode of your course, please contact your dean.

If you are unable to be in class for a session, you may do one of the following as a temporary measure:

- Teach online (returning to the listed mode of instruction as soon as you can do so)
- Assign students asynchronous work to make up for the missed session
- Identify a substitute

If you are supervising a graduate teaching associate or working with graduate students who are teaching and who may have questions, please advise them to keep the department course coordinator informed of their plan and let their advisor know to help arrange for course coverage outside of the normal 1–2 class sessions missed for a temporary absence.

Departments and schools must have a teaching plan in place in the event a teaching assistant is absent. This plan should not be the TA's responsibility. In all cases, if faculty or TAs are unwell, they should stay home. TAs will be funded through the semester regardless.

Health protocols should follow university guidance, and instructors should not modify them. Well-fitting masks are required in classrooms and all other indoor spaces. Additional protections may be required in clinical healthcare settings or in alignment with general safety practices for a particular circumstance, such as a lab.

You are strongly encouraged to assign seats and take attendance during each class session. This practice will allow the contact tracing team to more easily identify close contacts in the event a student tests positive for COVID-19.

Use technology resources for instructors

- Pool Room Technology: If you are teaching in one of the over 300 [pool classrooms](#) on the Columbus campus managed by the ODEE, [use the technology available](#) to you.
- On-Site Assistance: You can request a consultation or on-site assistance from ODEE's Classroom Services team. They can teach you how to use specific classroom technologies and strategize to accommodate students.
- CarmenZoom Resources: [The Teaching & Learning Resource Center](#) offers guidance for using CarmenZoom to either simulcast your class session to allow remote students to participate, or to record your class session and share with remote students.

CAMPUS HEALTH MEASURES

Among in-person activities, the university is prioritizing in-person teaching and learning. To decrease the number of people on campus, when possible, other events, gatherings or meetings should be transitioned to virtual formats. The university will closely monitor this guidance so that it can be updated as needed. Food and drink should not be served at any in-person event, gathering, or meeting. Exceptions can be made for rental agreements with third parties (non-university) that have already been confirmed, although masking must be strictly enforced.

The vast majority of buildings on campus are open for access. Over the

summer, facilities crews evaluated the operation of the heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems to maintain proper indoor air requirements inside classroom spaces and to ensure these rooms meet or exceed CDC recommendations. Enhanced cleaning of public spaces will continue.

All those who access university buildings must be masked regardless of vaccination status. This guidance includes classrooms, study areas, and conference rooms. You may unmask if you are alone in your office with the door closed. When you are in a space with others, you must mask. The university strongly recommends high-quality, well-fitting masks.

Each of the college units should develop protocols that balance working on campus and working remotely. The intent is to make sure that we have the needed in-person presence throughout the week, in large part so students can connect to resources that they need, but also allow for college faculty and staff to conduct work where they are most productive and effective.

VACCINATIONS, BOOSTERS, AND ILLNESS

Boosters are strongly encouraged. More than 92% of the university's faculty, staff and students have been vaccinated under the university's [vaccination requirement](#), and the university strongly encourages everyone to receive a COVID-19 booster as soon as they are eligible. Booster shots are available by appointment at Jesse Owens North on the Columbus campus and other locations throughout central Ohio and the state. For details, see the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes [Get Vaccinated page](#).

You are not allowed to ask students about their vaccination status. The decision to vaccinate is a personal health matter and protected under HIPAA.

If you are feeling sick in any way, stay home and report your illness through your normal process. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please obtain a COVID-19 test. Among other locations, the Wexner Medical Center has established a community testing site for symptomatic individuals in the parking garage at CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service), 2540 Olentangy River Road. Appointments are required. For hours and other information, see

the [Wexner Medical Center announcement](#).

MENTAL HEALTH

Take advantage of mental health resources on the [Safe and Healthy website](#). These last two years have been hard. Bern Melnyk, Dean of the College of Nursing and Chief Wellness Officer for the university, conducted surveys of faculty, staff and students throughout the year on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. This survey demonstrates that all populations demonstrated high levels of stress and anxiety.

I'm proud of how we handled the autumn semester. You all demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the mission of the university, our students, and each other.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Gilliam, MD, MPH

Executive Vice President and Provost



The Ohio State University



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203 Bricker Hall, 190 N. Oval Mall, Columbus, Ohio 43210

provost@osu.edu

oaa.osu.edu