

Hello Trailblazers,

We are excited to welcome everyone back to campus this fall. We want to take this opportunity to update you on our COVID-19 plans and protocols for the start of the semester.

Masks Optional

Similarly to how we ended last semester, masks will be optional around campus and individuals should decide to wear or not wear a mask based on their personal choice.

There continue to be the following exceptions:

- Masks will be required in the MountainOne Wellness Center (Health and Counseling Services), as required by MA state law.
- Faculty have the option of requesting that masks be worn in their classrooms.
- Staff and faculty also have the option of requesting that masks be worn in their individual office spaces, as posted.

Mask wearing is still a successful tool in preventing the spread of germs. As we continue in a mask-optional environment, please be respectful of each other's choices. We encourage people to wear masks, if they choose, and to always have one with them. Masks will continue to be available in locations across campus.

The College reserves the right to require mask-wearing at any time in the future, if public health related data necessitates it.

Testing

Due to the current transmission patterns of variants, we will make use of rapid antigen tests for symptomatic testing for students in Health Services, and we will make asymptomatic antigen tests available at locations for pickup across campus for all members of our community.

Anyone can also request free tests from covid.gov/tests.

Students: We recommend all resident students test no sooner than twenty-four hours prior to (and preferably the morning of) their arrival to campus, or the morning before their first class for commuter students. If a student tests positive, they will need to: stay home for the minimum recommended five-day isolation period before coming to campus, notify [Health Services](#) and, for resident students, notify [Residence Life and Housing](#) for additional information and instructions.

Positive COVID-19 Case Reporting

We will continue to follow [CDC](#) and [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) isolation and quarantine guidance for COVID-19 cases.

Students: If you test positive for COVID-19 at any point during the semester please contact [Health Services](#) for guidance regarding isolation.

Employees: If you test positive for COVID-19 please alert your supervisor and Barbara Chaput, Executive Director of Human Resources, ASAP. Supervisors alerted to a positive case should also be in touch with Human Resources for guidance. As standard protocol, we advise all COVID-19 positive employees to connect with their primary care physician or the Berkshire Medical Center COVID-19 hotline (855-262-5465) for additional instructions and guidance regarding isolation.

COVID-19 Information Site

Over the coming weeks, we will be converting our [COVID-19 information hub](#) on the MCLA website to a broader public health information page to continue to update our campus community on COVID-19 and to provide information on other communicable illnesses.

Our Pandemic Critical Incident Response Team (P-CIRT) will continue to meet periodically to stay abreast of the latest public health data points and inform the campus community as the academic year unfolds.

Please contact me with any questions.

Best wishes for a healthy start to the semester.
Gina

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