

Date: August 12, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

To: Deans and Department Heads

RE: Well-being and Communication Reminders

Dear Colleagues,

We are now less than two weeks away from the first day of classes, and this year we return to the excitement of in-person instruction and reunions with colleagues. Even with the temporary mask mandate, this is a moment of anticipation that we share with our students who are looking forward to working with us this academic year.

Our students have chosen K-State because of your excellence in RSCAD, teaching, and service to communities in Kansas and across the globe. Our students have chosen K-State because they want to join you in the enterprise of creating and sharing new knowledge and discoveries, creative endeavors, and solutions to the world's problems. Graduate students and undergraduates alike are here to be challenged and to succeed with your guidance.

As I have done over the last several weeks, I would like to offer some reminders as we formalize the courses, experiences, and services that we will offer this academic year.

**Firstly, I exhort you to be mindful of our communal health and well-being** this academic year, and to remind students about the small steps we can take to help stop the spread of the virus.

**Face Masks:** While we are in Phase Out, we will continue to follow CDC and state and local health guidance and adjust to these recommendations throughout the academic year. At this time, this means a temporary [face mask requirement](#) for all indoor spaces on university property implemented in response to the surge fueled by the delta variant. This applies to everyone regardless of vaccination status, though face masks may be removed when alone in private offices or workspaces.

**Vaccinations:** We are proud of K-State's 72% vaccination rate for students, faculty, and staff. While not a requirement, we continue to encourage vaccinations as the best measure to protect against COVID-19 and serious illness. Lafene Health Center offers [vaccines](#) Monday-Friday for students, faculty, and staff. In addition, we encourage everyone to voluntarily upload their vaccine cards to [myLafene+](#) patient portal. This will help us track vaccination rates at the University.

**Testing:** Currently, free on-campus symptomatic and asymptomatic [COVID-19 testing](#) is available. Feel free to offer up reminders of these resources to your students on your syllabi

and/or your Canvas sites. Of particular importance is making clear and evident the quarantine and isolation and COVID-19 exposure protocols links on our COVID-19 site. As these are continually in flux due to the dynamic situation we are in, these links provide up-to-date information for the whole campus.

**Secondly, please be mindful to communicate clear and careful guidelines to your students.**

**Attendance:** For in-person classes, let students know they are expected to attend class sessions unless they have an excused absence or have COVID-19 related symptoms, been exposed to the virus, are ill, or are in [quarantine](#). Students should always contact the Office of Student Life, who will inform the student's instructors. Students may also be encouraged to contact the faculty member directly.

- Students on the Manhattan campus can complete the form on the [Office of Student Life website](#) or contact them at 785-532-6432 or [stulife@ksu.edu](mailto:stulife@ksu.edu).
- Students on the Polytechnic campus should contact Kyle Chamberlin at 785-826-2662 or [kchamberlin5@k-state.edu](mailto:kchamberlin5@k-state.edu).
- Students on the Olathe campus should contact Kimberly Ramacciotti at 913-307-7313 or [kramacciotti@k-state.edu](mailto:kramacciotti@k-state.edu)

For hybrid or online courses, clarify any expectations for “in-person” or synchronous components. Make sure your students know the definitions of these terms and that they are clear on your expectations for how the modality will operate.

**Absences:** Provide clear instructions for students with excused absences or COVID-19 and other illness-related absences. You are not obligated to flip from an in-person to a hybrid course to accommodate a student. However, be clear about the strategies you have in place to attend for emergencies or excused absences. Let them know that you have been thoughtful about grappling with the ever-changing landscape in which we currently operate. Your consideration for their success in the course will encourage students to maintain open communication and to adhere to the health and safety protocols like staying home when ill, wearing face coverings, etc.

**Student Success:** Describe how you will conduct office hours, whether virtually or in-person. Explain how they may best connect with you throughout the semester. And consider adding the [Student Success Canvas Class](#) to your own Canvas site to provide students easy access to resources across campus.

**Finally, on or by next Friday, August 20, 2021, please remember to send your students a note of welcome with any information that will clarify what they need to know for a successful first couple of weeks in your course. This added layer of communication and support will encourage them to continue working with you to meet any challenges faced throughout the semester.**

Thank you for your commitment to our students and to a successful campus return. While the phase out may not look exactly as you imagined, I know that through our collective efforts we will continue our commitment to #keepkstatestrong.