

Tuesday, August 18, 2020 – Message from Provost Taber: COVID-related absences and request for participation in Faculty Senate survey

Dear Colleagues,

Please see below a message from Provost Taber.

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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to share some additional information about topics that have emerged as we have moved through our first day of instruction for the Fall 2020 semester.

1. **COVID-related absences.** We anticipate a number of students will need to complete isolation or quarantine periods during the semester. We are aware of a small number who have already reported they are in isolation or quarantine due to illness or exposure, including travel-related quarantine.

I want to clarify that absences related to COVID-related isolation or quarantine are considered university excused absences. These absences must be verified through the Office of Student Life (OSL). This COVID-19 guidance supplements the information on absences defined in [F62 in the University Handbook](#). As a university excused absence, all faculty are required to accommodate students who need to miss class due to COVID-19-related illness, isolation or quarantine.

To facilitate the notification of faculty, we ask students to contact the university to explain their situation and ask for assistance with instructor notifications and questions about class absences.

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

Students will utilize the existing process of notifying the Office of Student Life or student life contact on their campus, which will in turn notify all instructors. The OSL will verify and document the absence. Students who reach out to faculty to report their isolation or quarantine should be directed to contact OSL.

Standardization of this process offers several benefits to students, faculty, and the university. Students need only report one time instead of to multiple faculty. The OSL will verify all absences, offering the faculty confidence in the process. While the OSL communicates regularly with Lafene Health Center, the student-initiated communication captures students who may have utilized another healthcare provider. Information about the number of COVID-related absences will be shared in the aggregate to help track COVID-19 in our communities.

FAQs related to this policy have been updated on the [academic instruction](#) and [isolation and quarantine](#) sections of the [COVID-19 guidance and FAQ website](#).

2. **Faculty Senate survey.** Faculty Senate president Mindy Markham is distributing a survey to learn more about your first days of instruction for the fall semester. We welcome your observations and insights, and are especially interested in your assessment of the rate of adoption of required behaviors such as physical distancing and wearing a face mask. If you have not completed the [survey](#), please do so by noon on Wednesday, August 19.

Please continue to share these messages across your units. We are appreciative of your many efforts to launch our fall 2020 semester. I remain cautiously optimistic about our weeks ahead.

Stay safe and be well.

Chuck

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Charles Taber
Provost and Executive Vice President
Professor of Political Science
Kansas State University