

Friday, August 28, 2020 – Message from Provost Taber: COVID-19 Compliance Survey Results and Guidance/FAQ Update

Dear Colleagues,

Please see below a message from Provost Taber.

Thanks,

Mindy

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Dear Colleagues,

As we near the end of the second week of the fall semester, I am writing to provide an update on several topics that have emerged.

1. **Faculty Senate survey results.** Faculty Senate president Mindy Markham distributed a survey last week to collect your feedback about the first two days of the semester. The questions focused on observations regarding compliance for two required health and safety behaviors – wearing a face covering and social distancing. I have attached the survey results here (*survey results were provided via email to K-State faculty/staff*) for your information. The survey data was used to inform the decision to revise the face covering policy and to improve education and outreach efforts. We will repeat this survey on a biweekly basis beginning September 8 to monitor perceptions about compliance, what is working well, and what can be improved.
2. **Revised face covering policy.** As shared in President Myers' [letter](#) this week, an important outcome of the survey was recognition of the need for more clarity

regarding when to wear a face covering outdoors, particularly when walking in groups and passing in close proximity to others. We have revised the [face coverings policy and FAQ](#) and clarified guidance on what is acceptable as face coverings and the use of face shields as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

- 3. Face covering policy enforcement.** Not surprisingly, questions about enforcing our face coverings policy have been raised this week. You can find the guidance on enforcement with our [face covering policy and FAQ](#). The Office of Student Life also provided an [article](#) this week that outlines the process for enforcement of the face covering policy for students. I encourage all faculty and staff to submit timely reports for concerns about student behavior in adhering to the policy. Following this process allows us to monitor compliance at the university level and track and address students who repeatedly refuse to comply.

Several employees have also asked what to do if they are uncomfortable raising a concern with colleagues or with their immediate supervisor about colleagues not wearing a face mask. Employees in this situation should visit with another supervisor, such as a department head, dean, or vice president. If for any reason, you are uncomfortable raising the concern within your department or college, please contact [Employee Relations & Engagement](#).

As with anything new, there is a period of adoption that requires education and reinforcement of the desired behavior, not just for students, but for all of us. While frustrating, reminders matter in the effort to promote the health and wellness practices that will help mitigate the spread of the virus.

- 4. Physical distancing and cleaning in the classrooms.** Faculty and students must also adapt to additional health and wellness practices in the classroom, including maintaining 6-foot physical distance and the [cleaning protocols](#). It is a faculty responsibility to ensure classrooms are cleaned when they are finished teaching. I thank you all for your efforts. Just like wearing face coverings in class, these practices are also important to mitigate health risks.
- 5. Student absences due to COVID-19.** Several of you have asked for additional clarification about how you would know if a student in your class was impacted by COVID-19, either by testing positive or as a Close Contact. We have also been asked whether faculty needed to notify anyone if a student reported to you a need to be excused from class due to the virus. The Office of Student Life (OSL) reiterated the [guidance in another article](#) this week in K-State Today. Please direct students to notify OSL using the established procedure when there is any need for isolation and quarantine. OSL will notify all instructors of the need for the excused absence.
- 6. COVID-19 in our communities.** The [updated COVID-19 in our communities](#) webpage includes links to where you can find information about the status of COVID-19 within our communities and within our state. This week a university dashboard was added with data about some key indicators regarding COVID-19 in our university community. This data will be updated weekly on Wednesdays and includes data from the previous week. At this time, the information about individuals in isolation or

quarantine is limited to students, both on and off campus. We hope to add data about employees in the coming weeks.

7. **Back-to-back in-person and synchronous, online courses.** Many of you have asked where students can find space on campus to participate in an online course when they are in back-to-back classes. On the Manhattan campus, space is available in the K-State Student Union and K-State Libraries, with more limited space available in the Business and Leadership Studies buildings. On the Polytechnic campus, Technology Center rooms 106 and 115, Tullis, and The Library have available spaces. Students may use Cat's Pause, Main Lobby, Bistro and Room #132 on the Olathe campus. Other venues are being explored to meet demand, including the use of tents to make outdoor spaces available. Students should bring ear buds or headphones as a courtesy to other students. An [FAQ](#) has been added to the COVID-19 guidance and will be updated as more options become available.

Earlier today you received a [special K-State Today notice](#) regarding COVID-19 outbreaks in five Greek Housing units. As President Myers stated, we must all work together to mitigate the spread of this virus on our campuses and in our communities.

Please continue to share these messages across your units. Thank you for your commitment to providing transformative learning, discovery, and support during these unique times.

Stay safe and be well.

Chuck

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Charles Taber

Provost and Executive Vice President

Professor of Political Science

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