

Update on Fall COVID-19 Protocols and Monkeypox Information

It has come to our attention that the message below (sent last Friday) did not reach everyone's accounts. The technical problem is now resolved so we are sending the message again. Please note one addition to this message--employees can pick up COVID-19 tests from both HR and the Office of Student Life (Cro 218).

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As we prepare to go into this next academic year, we'd like to begin by sharing the protocols related to COVID-19. The COVID-19 planning group has been meeting to discuss Fall 2022 plans and, as always, we are consulting with Hartford HealthCare, CT Department of Public Health, and our CT and NESCAC peers.

This is our third full academic year on campus with COVID-19. Our planning has evolved each year based on circumstances with the virus and the tools available to support our health (e.g. testing, vaccines, treatments). Through it all, we've learned more and more about how to live with COVID-19 while continuing to offer an engaging, in-person, residential educational experience.

As we go into this next semester, vaccines are available for children as young as six months; a second booster is available and highly recommended for people 50 or over; and a new version of the vaccine, more effective against omicron and its variants, is expected in September. What seems clear is that COVID-19, with its many variants, will be with us for the foreseeable future. The good news is that the virus, while more communicable, causes less severe symptoms for those who are fully vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and there are also effective drugs available to treat those who become infected. In addition, a well-fitting KN95 mask or the equivalent provides some protection from the virus even when others are not masked.

Our planned protocols for this fall move us closer to more normal operations on our campus but with tools also available to respond to

COVID-19 as needed. As we have all recognized, the past two and a half years have contributed to greater isolation which has been challenging for all of us and, in particular, students as they embark on their college experience. It is therefore critical for us to not only be focused on physical health but also mental health. One of the many strategies that we are implementing in addressing this area of concern is to return to an as close to normal Connecticut College education and overall experience as possible.

Below are the protocols we will be implementing this semester.

• **Vaccination:**

- Employees are required to be “fully vaccinated,” which means you have the initial two dose vaccine series and a booster unless you have an approved exemption for medical or religious reasons.
- Those over 50 years old who have not received a second booster should consult with your physician about whether to do so now or to wait for the new vaccine expected in September.
- When a new vaccine/booster is offered during the Fall 2022 semester, the College will partner with Hartford HealthCare and/or the Community Health Center to offer vaccine clinics on campus.

• **Testing:**

- The college will not be running a PCR testing program for asymptomatic students and employees.
- At the start of the semester, employees may go to Human Resources or the Office of Student Life (Cro 218) to pick up a test kit with two tests that they can use during the Fall semester.
- Rapid antigen tests for symptomatic testing will be available for employees at Human Resources and the Office of Student Life (Cro 218). These tests are only to be used by employees for symptomatic testing and not intended to be given to family members, for travel, or other personal reasons. Rapid antigen tests are available at local stores if testing is needed for non-symptomatic purposes.

• **Masks:**

- Masking indoors is optional on campus except in the following locations/circumstances:
 - Masks are required in Warnshuis waiting area for Student Health Services and Student Counseling Services and in Student Health Services exam rooms.
 - Masks are required in campus spaces where signage notes that masking is still expected. You may communicate to people entering your room or workspace that you would like them to wear a mask by posting this [sign](#).
 - Masks are optional in classrooms unless the class is polled and it is determined that masks will be expected to be worn with the particular class group.
 - Masks are optional in meetings unless the meeting facilitator or group determines that masks will be expected to be worn in the meeting space.
- Masks are required if symptomatic with COVID-19 or other upper respiratory infection symptoms, within ten days of a COVID-19 positive test, or a close contact of someone with COVID-19.
- People's circumstances are different, and therefore, we will make different choices in a variety of settings on whether we wear masks. As a result, it is important that our campus remain mask-friendly, as many individuals may choose to wear masks in spaces where they are not required or they may ask you to wear a mask. Please be courteous and respectful with regard to the needs and choices of others about masking. Everyone on campus is expected to carry a mask and be prepared to wear it:
 - Upon entering a space where masking is required or
 - Upon the request of another member of the community.
- KN95 masks are available in Student Health Services, Office of Student Life (Cro 218), Human Resources, Dean of the Faculty Office, Unity House, Harris Dining Hall and Shain Library Circulation Desk.

• **Employees Who Test Positive for COVID-19:**

- **If an employee tests positive with COVID-19 from a rapid antigen test or other off-campus diagnosis, you must notify the College. Employees should email**

covidhr@conncoll.edu. Employees will receive instructions from a member of the Human Resources staff.

- Employees can pick up an isolation kit (containing KN95 masks and rapid tests) from Human Resources.
- The recovery period can be between five and ten days (Day 0 is the day the COVID-19 test was taken). A **single** negative test between Day 5 and Day 10 will enable you to return to work. Please send a picture of your negative test result to covidhr@conncoll.edu. ***Once you submit the picture you can return to work—you do not need to wait for a response.*** If you complete the recovery before ten days, you should continue to take precautions (e.g. wear a well-fitting mask around other people) until Day 10.
- The College will not be facilitating a contact tracing process. It is recommended that you notify people who you identify as being a close contact. A person is considered a close contact if they have been within six feet of you for 15 minutes or more during what is considered the infectious period, which is 48 hours prior to positive diagnosis or onset of symptoms.

• **Close Contacts:**

- You may hear directly from a person with COVID-19 that they tested positive and that you are a close contact.
- Close contacts are expected to consistently wear a mask and should watch symptoms for 10 days from their last close contact with the positive person.
- Close contacts should test with a rapid antigen test on Day 5 from their last contact with the positive person and should test if they begin to experience symptoms.

• **Visitors:**

- All campus buildings are open to visitors.
- Full-capacity attendance will be permitted indoors for events and other gatherings.
- Proof of vaccination or testing is not required for visitors.
- It is recommended that visitors be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 (initial two dose series and booster) and the College asks that all visitors perform a self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms. If a visitor has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 they should take a rapid antigen (at-home/over the

counter) test before coming to campus. If the test is positive they should not come to campus and if it is negative they are welcome to come to campus but, given the symptoms, should wear a KN95 mask or the equivalent.

We are also closely monitoring the rise in monkeypox cases, which prompted the World Health Organization to issue a [global health emergency](#). This is an evolving situation that Student Health Services is tracking closely so we can implement, if necessary, appropriate health and safety measures that protect our community. Connecticut's Department of Public Health is also building capacity for testing, treatment and vaccinations (for those who meet current criteria and with limited availability). For more details on monkeypox, we recommend that you review a [document](#) that Hartford HealthCare has prepared and posted on the Student Health Services website.

As we know, circumstances can change, and we will adjust, if necessary, but we anticipate these plans will guide us through the coming academic year. We will continue to communicate with the campus as necessary and the [Path Forward](#) COVID-19 is updated with the latest information.

Thank you and we look forward to enjoying a successful fall semester together.

Sincerely,

Victor Arcelus
Dean of Students

R. Danielle Egan
Dean of the Faculty

Reginal White
Vice President for Human Resources