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Return to Campus Guidelines



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

TO: University of Georgia Faculty and Staff

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RE: Return to Campus Guidelines

DATE: May 14, 2021

As we conclude the 2020-21 Academic Year with Spring Commencement exercises, we want to take a moment to say thank you to the many dedicated members of our faculty and staff who have worked so hard to enable us to reach this point. Together, we have endeavored to keep our campus community safe and healthy while ensuring that our vital mission of teaching, research and service continues, even in the most challenging circumstances.

We have come a long way over the course of the year. COVID-19 vaccines are readily available to those who desire them, and rates of infection in our campus community are at the lowest level since we began surveillance testing last August—with only

seven positive cases reported last week.

Thanks to our collective efforts as a campus community, we are now able to plan for a full return to normal operations for Fall Semester 2021. We are excited to envision the vibrancy of campus life as we resume traditional student activities and interaction in classrooms, labs, concert halls and athletic venues.

The University System of Georgia issued [new guidelines to campuses](#) on May 13, 2021, and the measures below are based on those instructions.

RESUMING NORMAL OPERATIONS

In order to be ready for the fall, we must transition over the coming weeks to bring everyone back to pre-COVID normal operations. We appreciate that many faculty and staff members have been fully on campus since last fall and that a number of others have returned to campus since that time.

It is our goal to have everyone back in the workplace in their pre-pandemic work arrangements on **June 14, 2021**. However, we also understand that some staff members will face difficult circumstances related to childcare and other concerns in this transition period. Therefore, we urge all supervisors to be as flexible as possible with those returning from teleworking or rotational schedules through **June 30, 2021**, the date the University System of Georgia (USG) has set for all COVID-19-based work arrangements to expire.

Department heads or their designees should consider future requests for telework arrangements in accordance with the pre-pandemic [UGA Telecommuting Policy](#). Please contact Human Resources at 542-2222 or hrweb@uga.edu for assistance with any telecommuting arrangements.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The USG has also determined that Alternate Work Arrangements or accommodations granted to faculty and staff for Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 due to increased risk for severe illness with COVID-19 will end no later than **June 30, 2021**. Current summer teaching assignments are excluded from this transition deadline.

Alternate Educational Arrangements granted to students for Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 due to COVID-19 also will end no later than **June 30, 2021**. All students are expected to return to their traditional educational arrangement beginning Fall Semester.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

As we prepare to return to our pre-pandemic workforce in a few weeks and to full

campus activity in August, we urge you to remain diligent in following the latest CDC and DPH health and safety protocols. Most importantly, we strongly encourage you to be vaccinated.

Vaccines

To date, we have administered nearly 22,000 vaccines to approximately 13,000 individuals at the University Health Center. Of those, more than 11,500 are now fully vaccinated. Earlier this week, the University Health Center broadened vaccination eligibility beyond our faculty, staff and students to include eligible dependents of UGA faculty, staff, and students; UGA retirees; spouses/partners of retirees, faculty, staff, and students; visitors to campus engaged in research, academic or non-academic summer engagement/transition opportunities; those visiting campus as part of Orientation; and active employees and (primarily) students enrolled at other USG institutions who live in the Athens vicinity. This service will continue throughout the summer and fall.

We are scheduling appointments for students and employees through the [UHC Vaccine Portal](#). ***For those members of the expanded eligibility groups listed above, please submit this survey at https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eDI3Y9XrWdltIEW, and the UHC will reach out to you to schedule the appointment directly.*** Please note that the UHC will provide second doses to any student, even if they have graduated before the date of their second dose is due.

Testing

Over the course of the 2020-21 academic year, the University Health Center and Veterinary Diagnostic Lab conducted nearly 75,000 tests for COVID-19, providing critical information on an individual basis and helping the Medical Oversight Task Force to make informed recommendations for the overall wellbeing of our campus community. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the faculty and staff who have developed and maintained our testing and vaccine programs.

Free surveillance testing will continue to be offered to our faculty, staff and students throughout the summer. Note that the location of the sample collection site will move from Legion Field to the University Health Center as of Monday, May 17. ***For the safety of your family and friends, please consider getting tested if you are not fully vaccinated.*** Appointments can be booked via the Vet View scheduling process.

Social Distancing and Face Coverings

The University System has now updated its guidance on face coverings and social distancing in accordance with the advice provided by the Centers for Disease Control

distancing in accordance with the advice provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on May 13, 2021. Effective immediately, fully vaccinated individuals can resume campus classes and other activities without physically distancing or wearing a mask. Unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to continue socially distancing from others when possible and wearing a face covering while inside campus facilities.

The USG has indicated that summer courses may continue to observe appropriate levels of social distancing as determined by the institution. UGA will continue to follow social distancing this summer.

Other Measures

As a society, we have learned a great deal about COVID-19 over the past year, and that enhanced knowledge has informed the extensive measures we have taken at the University of Georgia to protect our faculty, staff and students. Many of these measures will remain in place, and even be strengthened, for the Fall Semester.

For example, we know that the COVID-19 virus is primarily transmitted through the air. For that reason, our FMD teams have increased total daily air exchanges in 5.1 million square feet of academic and research space. Portable HEPA units have been delivered to more than 50,000 square feet of classrooms, and a UV disinfection array has been installed at the Miller Learning Center. Overall, nearly \$2 million in aged HVAC systems have been modernized or replaced over the last academic year. That work will continue in the coming months, with \$3.8 million of HVAC projects to be completed over the summer and another \$4 million in modernizations scheduled for the fall. In addition, 1 million square feet of UV disinfection systems will be installed in areas of high student activity.

All of the special cleaning and disinfection protocols that were put in place will continue, with particular emphasis on high-touch surfaces in all of our buildings. In addition, we will still supply hand sanitizing stations and wipes. The plexiglass shields that have been installed in classrooms, buses, point-of-sale locations and other settings will remain. We will continue to follow CDC and DPH guidance on appropriate preventative measures.

DawgCheck

The daily email reminder for the DawgCheck symptom screener will be discontinued as of Monday, May 17. However, if you test positive for COVID-19 at any time, you are **still required to report it** through the [DawgCheck Test Reporting Survey](#). We encourage you to stay at home if you become ill or until you have excluded COVID-19 as the cause of your symptoms. UGA adheres to current CDC quarantine and

isolation [guidance](#) and requires that it be followed. Note that students, faculty and staff who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms.

TRAVEL

The University of Georgia will follow the University of System of Georgia's position on travel. Unit leaders have full and complete discretion to authorize essential travel, as needed, to carry out their mission and priorities.

EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

The University of Georgia will continue to follow the Governor's Executive Orders and guidance from the Department of Public Health related to events and gatherings.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OVERSIGHT

Members of the Medical Oversight Task Force and Preventative Measures Advisory Board have served the University of Georgia campus community in many ways over the past year, from advising on testing protocol and administration of vaccine and quarantine/isolation measures (MOTF) to providing training tools and guidelines for the safe resumption of our widely varied student life, research and outreach activities (PMAB). We are grateful for their service. Their leadership as experts in the fields of medicine, infectious disease, public health, environmental health and safety, and communications has been instrumental to our ability to navigate the year successfully, and we will continue to be guided by their knowledge and insights, as needed, over the summer.

MONITORING CONDITIONS

Please note that the guidance referenced in this memo is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control, Governor's Office or University System of Georgia. We will be monitoring conditions associated with the COVID-19 virus throughout the summer months, and we must all continue to remain flexible and be prepared to change course, if necessary.

Thank you once again for your collective efforts to help keep us Dawg Strong/Georgia Strong. We are looking forward to having everyone back on campus in a few weeks and to resuming normal operations for the Fall Semester. We will provide additional updates to the campus community on an as-needed basis over the summer.

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