December 1, 2021

Dear Students,

As the fall semester winds down and we prepare to depart campus for a well-deserved winter break, I want to share with you some of the COVID-19 protocols that will be in place in advance of the upcoming spring semester. Our goal is to provide a safe and robust student experience upon our return to campus in the spring. In accordance with the existing requirement that students be fully immunized against COVID-19, **all students will be required to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot.** In addition, there is an expectation that **all students will be tested two weeks prior to the start of spring classes.**

**Vaccine Boosters**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends a booster for all individuals 18 and older, which means that virtually all of our students should receive a booster, and, noting the expected continued emergence of new COVID-19 variants, the CDC further emphasizes the importance of vaccination boosters. Anyone 18 and older is eligible to receive a booster six months after their second Pfizer or Moderna shots, or two months after the single-dose Johnson & Johnson.

You can make an appointment to get a vaccine booster by identifying a location through the Massachusetts COVID-19 vaccine finder or Vaccines.gov to find additional sites. Unfortunately, there are no vaccine appointments available at the campus Public Health Promotion Center (PHPC) at this time. PHPC vaccine clinic appointments are fully booked for the remainder of the semester but will resume in January. Please check the UMass vaccine website to book an appointment in the new year. Individuals who were previously granted exemptions from vaccinations for medical or religious reasons will continue to be required to test twice weekly during the spring semester.

The vaccine booster, combined with the advance testing explained below, and ongoing wastewater testing, adaptive testing, convenient voluntary testing options and our indoor mask requirement represent a comprehensive approach to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure a safe and successful spring for our community.

**COVID-19 Advance Testing**

All students are expected to undergo an advance COVID-19 test between 10 and 14 days prior to the start of spring classes on Jan. 25, 2022. There are three advance testing options for meeting this requirement:
Mail-in Test: Prior to their departure for winter break, students can pick up a testing kit and a pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope at the PHPC in the Campus Center. Students should conduct their unobserved test between Monday, Jan. 10 and Friday, Jan. 14, following the instructions provided, and promptly use the pre-addressed envelope to mail in their test.

Test in Person: The PHPC will be in operation for testing over winter break. Students who choose to do so may complete the COVID-19 test at the PHPC between Monday, Jan. 10 and Thursday, Jan. 13.

Test at a Stop the Spread Location: Individuals anywhere in Massachusetts can test free of charge at any of the more than 450 Stop the Spread sites. Across the U.S., community-based testing sites are available. Individuals should conduct their test between Monday, Jan. 10 and Friday, Jan. 14, and have the results emailed to testing@umass.edu no later than Monday, Jan. 17. This must be a PCR test.

Students who do not take a COVID-19 advance test as outlined in the options above will be expected to test at the PHPC immediately upon arrival on campus for the start of the semester. Students who test positive upon their arrival on campus will be sent home to isolate for 10 days, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The advance testing program will help provide the university an assessment of COVID-19 infections as the semester begins, and it allows any student who tests positive to meet the isolation requirements before classes start and therefore not miss any in-person instruction time.

Face Coverings
We expect to continue the current campus indoor face covering requirement to start the spring semester. The face covering requirement will be reviewed during the semester.

I am truly grateful to each and every one of you for the part you have played in helping to make this past semester a success. Your cooperation, understanding and adherence to campus public health protocols have played a big part in ensuring the health and safety of the entire campus community. I wish you all a peaceful and happy winter break.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy