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## From the Provost: Classroom Safety, July 15, 2020

University of Northern Iowa

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# University of Northern Iowa

## From the Provost: Classroom Safety

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Dear Colleagues,

As we get closer to the fall semester, I will continue to provide details regarding our reopening protocol that are critical to faculty. Classroom safety is a key issue and I want to share specific information with you. The fall semester will be a new experience for us all, and it will be important that we are clear in our expectations, but offer grace and support as everyone adjusts to very different and stressful circumstances.

### **Classroom Seating**

Guidance from the CDC and IDPH demonstrates that reducing the number of people who are together at one time helps reduce spreading of COVID-19. To support this we have assigned classes to rooms so that we are using only 40% of the identified capacity. Classes have also been capped at no more than 50 students, regardless of the room capacity.

In most cases, the chairs and tables that will not be used cannot be removed from the rooms, so Facilities Management will mark seats for non-use based on maximizing the spacing between students. It is important that students and faculty respect these markings and do not alter them in any way.

Faculty are expected to use assigned seating for the semester in order to help us quickly determine who might need to be contacted should someone become ill with COVID-19. You should assign the seating early in the semester and encourage consistency. To help support this, Facilities will also make available seating diagrams for each room showing the arrangement of appropriate seating.

### **Facilities Changes**

To ensure a higher level of air quality in classrooms and other indoor spaces, HVAC systems have been adjusted wherever possible. The total air mass in rooms will be exchanged at least six times per hour and new, high efficiency filters have also been installed.

Custodial staff will conduct enhanced cleaning and disinfection of all classrooms daily. Additionally, door wedges will be distributed across campus so doors can be propped open before and after class to reduce touch points.

## Mask requirement

Out of care and concern for all members of our campus community, the University of Northern Iowa will require everyone on our campus to wear a face covering (mask or shield) while in campus buildings, and in outdoor settings when six feet or more of physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made while alone in a private office, residence hall room, and while eating in designated spaces. As you read the next two sections, please click on the highlighted links for detailed information about how to enforce the face covering requirement.

The requirement for face coverings includes using them in classrooms throughout the class period. Departments can help remind students of use by [posting signs](#) around classroom areas. While we anticipate the majority of our students will support these efforts, [faculty can and should insist on compliance](#) in any rare instances when a student does not have appropriate face covering. If a student does not wear a face covering throughout the class period, faculty should first ask them to put on a face covering. We will be communicating heavily with students before they come to campus about this requirement, but it will still be new for everyone so some students may simply forget it at first. If they wish to comply but don't have a mask, retail outlets around campus will have them for sale. Departments will be provided a small supply of disposable masks that they can give out at their discretion early in the semester.

If a student chooses not to comply they should be asked to leave class and be [referred](#) to the student to the [student conduct process](#) through the Dean of Students office. If a student refuses to leave or becomes argumentative in any way, the faculty member should feel comfortable ending class and then [referring](#) the student to the [student conduct process](#). Dean of Students staff will contact the faculty member for additional information and next steps as quickly as possible. In these instances, [interim actions](#) may be utilized by the Dean of Students staff through the student conduct process to deny further access to class until the matter is resolved. Despite our policy and expectation, wearing a mask is not required by law and the UNI Police will not respond to calls about mask compliance. However, should a situation arise where a person is threatening or belligerent, police will respond to maintain the safety of the campus community. Faculty are encouraged to read how the [student conduct process may be used to uphold campus expectations related to COVID-19](#) for more details on processes and sanctions, as well as [advice on de-escalation](#) and managing difficult situations with care.

## Student Education on Campus Requirements

We will be communicating regularly with students about all of these requirements throughout the remainder of the summer. Students will receive access to a required online COVID-19 training program during the week of July 20. This training program in eLearning includes several brief videos, associated text, and quizzes covering the following content:

- COVID-19 background information, Dr. Susan Roberts-Dobie, Public Health & Education

- Face covering requirements, NISG student leaders
- Physical distancing inside and outside the classroom, Dr. Jerreme Jackson, Biology
- Preventative care and staying home when sick, Sarah Behrends, Associate Director of Nursing, UNI Health Clinic
- Cleaning and disinfecting campus spaces, Joseph Rayzor, Environmental Health & Safety
- Student accountability and campus resources, Allyson Rafanello, Dean of Students

The online training will conclude with students signing a [commitment document](#) that outlines campus requirements related to COVID-19. Staff in the Offices of Student Success & Retention and the Dean of Students will coordinate follow-up outreach to students in order to ensure timely completion of both the training and signing of the agreement.

### **Policy and Expectations**

Two changes will be in place for faculty in the 2020-2021 academic year. First, all faculty are asked to include the following statement regarding face coverings and distancing in their class syllabi. This syllabus statement will supplement and reinforce the informational training model students will be required to complete.

*Protecting our campus from COVID-19 depends on all of us acting with care and responsibility. To protect each other and our campus community, we are required to wear masks or face shields that cover our mouths and noses inside all campus buildings, including throughout the duration of class. We are asked to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms, stay away from others and seek medical attention if we're not feeling well and/or experience any symptoms such as a fever over 100.4°, and to communicate and plan proactively to make up for missed learning. We will maintain physical distancing by sitting in designated areas in the classroom. Failure to follow these requirements can result in students being referred to the student conduct process and faculty being referred to the Associate Provost for Faculty. We take these steps together recognizing that my mask protects you, your mask protects me, and together wearing masks protects the entire UNI community. Our collective actions will determine our ability to remain together in an in-person learning environment.*

Second, Faculty Senate has approved the following addendum to Policy 3.06 on attendance to make COVID-19 related absences excused. When students need to miss class for illness, self-isolation, or quarantine, faculty must provide a means for students to remain current on material or a way to make up work missed.

*Absences related to COVID-19 illness, self-isolation, or quarantine. Faculty teaching Face-to-Face must be prepared to also offer online instruction and/or have assignment alternatives for individual students who are unable to attend class due to COVID-related issues. This should also extend to field experiences that students may not be able to attend for the same reasons.*

As we approach the start of the fall semester, please continue to monitor your email for updates and check the [Forward Together](#) website often. Emails such as this one will be archived on the [Campus Updates](#) section of the website for future reference.

Be well,  
Jim