

1-28-2021

## Forward Together Update, January 28, 2021

University of Northern Iowa

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### Recommended Citation

University of Northern Iowa, "Forward Together Update, January 28, 2021" (2021). *UNI Response to COVID-19*. 112.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/covid19/112>

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## Forward Together Update

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Dear Panther Community,

We wanted to share some news and provide some updates. During the fall semester, thanks both to stacked mitigation strategies that included requiring face coverings, physical distancing and the combined efforts of campus in following them, we were able to finish the fall semester in person.

During the fall semester 4.72% of UNI's population (who tested positive at the Student Health Clinic) was infected with COVID-19 compared to 5.25% of the state's population. While these numbers are one data set of many available, we believe they do demonstrate that all of our efforts on campus have made a difference.

### Variants and Masks

We're continuing to watch CDC guidance and reports of the COVID-19 variants. While none have so far been detected in Iowa, the British variant has now been found in two dozen states. Variants from South Africa and Brazil were found in South Carolina and Minnesota this week, and another possible one is being studied in California.

Information regarding these new variants is still emerging, at this time it is understood by the CDC that while these variants most likely do not cause more severe illness they may spread more easily. Therefore, we must all remain vigilant in following the mitigation strategies that served us well during the fall semester. Remember, physically distance, wash your hands, complete the [PantherHealth Survey](#), and wear a mask.

According to the CDC, individuals should continue to wear masks that "completely cover the nose and mouth, have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, and fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps." While there has been increased public discussion of wearing two masks, for now the CDC has not changed its guidance. We will continue to closely track any future developments.

### Your Questions

Student questions about the spring semester were submitted via UNI's Instagram page (follow us here!). We wanted to take a minute to answer a few.

*"When will we know more information about getting our vaccine?"* UNI will provide this information as it becomes available from the Blackhawk County Health Department.

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Currently, for those who are 65 and older, that information will be **provided to you** by your healthcare provider.

*"Still wearing masks?"* Yes! This will be a requirement for the foreseeable future even after vaccinations become more widespread. It's unknown whether people who have been vaccinated can still spread the virus to others.

*"Will masks still be mandatory in dorm hallways?"* Also, yes!

*"When Covid vaccines are accessible to everyone will we be able to get them here?"* Yes.

If you have a question, please visit [forwardtogether.uni.edu](https://forwardtogether.uni.edu) or email it to [forwardtogether@uni.edu](mailto:forwardtogether@uni.edu). Thanks for all that you do to keep yourself, your family and the Panther community safe.

Stay Well,

John Vallentine, Associate Provost for Faculty  
Joseph Rayzor, Director of Risk Management, Environmental Health and Safety