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Forward Together Update [Start of a New Semester Faculty & Staff Focused], January 12, 2022

University of Northern Iowa

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Forward Together Update

Dear Faculty & Staff Members,

Welcome to the start of a new semester. The COVID-19 Steering and campus Liaison Committees, consisting of 27 colleagues from across the entire campus, are fully engaged on a daily and weekly basis to support you and your work environment. Before classes begin on January 20 we wanted to share with you how we can help slow the spread of COVID-19 in 2022, including some important information related to:

- Omicron Variant
- Spring Protocols
- Seating Charts
- Syllabus Statement Regarding Absences

We have the tools on campus to slow the spread of Omicron this semester. Vaccines and testing will be available at the Student Health Center, the updated Panther Health Survey will provide critical information to those impacted by COVID-19, and masks are encouraged on campus.

If you are unvaccinated, you are more at risk for severe illness, hospitalization and death. Those not fully vaccinated currently account for [81.7% of COVID-19 patients in the ICU](#). UNI will continue to encourage vaccines and host vaccine clinics at the Student Health Center each week.

If you are vaccinated, stay up to date with your vaccines. For information regarding when you should get your booster shot visit the [CDC's vaccine page](#), speak with your healthcare provider or call the Student Health Center's COVID-19 line at 319-273-2100.

If you are seeking testing, it is available on campus. The UNI Student Health Center will reopen on Friday, January 14. Call the SHC at 319 273-2100 for an appointment. [Test Iowa](#) (saliva) kits are also available for free in the lobby of the SHC. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the SHC's COVID-19 phone line, access IDPH resources by dialing 211, or speak with your healthcare provider

If you are sick, stay home. Isolating yourself when you have COVID-19, cold or flu symptoms is an important part of protecting our campus. Faculty and staff can discuss available leave options with Human Resource Services (hrrs-leaves@uni.edu or 319-273-2422).

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If you are sick, exposed to COVID-19 or unable to report to work, complete the Panther Health Survey. The university is continuing to use the [Panther Health Survey](#), which has been updated according to **NEW [quarantine and isolation guidelines](#)** just released from the CDC. The Panther Health Survey is used to assist those who are:

- Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19;
- Have been exposed to COVID-19; or
- Unable to report to campus for class, work, or other assignments due to COVID-19.

If you are coming to campus, masks are encouraged in all UNI indoor spaces, including classrooms. The [CDC](#) recommends that everyone wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of high community transmission regardless of your vaccination status. Well-fitting, multilayered masks are key to reducing the spread of COVID-19. Medical-grade face masks are also readily available now, such as N95 and KN95, which are more effective at protecting yourself and others from the spread of the more transmissible Omicron variant.

Thank you for your efforts, which help immensely in protecting the campus community.

Spring Protocols

The university's [Spring Protocols](#) for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic apply to all employees (faculty, staff, student employees) and are rooted in protecting the health and safety of our students, employees and the general public we interact with. This document is aligned with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Iowa Department of Public Health and Black Hawk County Public Health.

We continue to follow State of Iowa [Board of Regents guidelines](#) still in effect from May 2021. Any future changes will be communicated as they become available.

Seating Charts

All updated classroom floor plans are available for download on the [Forward Together website](#). This is proactively completed by faculty in case clusters are identified and the Black Hawk County Health Department needs to be contacted. We're asking that completed seating charts be uploaded to the folder for each course you teach, which is identifiable within the following college and department spring 2022 [Google Drive](#). Please upload your seating charts as soon as possible or by Friday, February 4.

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Anyone at the [IT Service Desk](#) can assist you if needed through Service Hub or by calling 273-5555.

Be as clear and direct as you can on your charts in case contact tracing would be necessary by Black Hawk County Health Department officials. If you are teaching online, you do not need to upload a seating chart or a roster.

Spring 2022 Syllabus Statement

This semester's syllabus statement is automatically included in Blackboard, or should be included in the student syllabi you distribute. The statement is available on the provost's website: provost.uni.edu/required-syllabus-statements. Faculty must be prepared to have assignment alternatives for individual students (if they complete the Panther Health Survey) who are unable to attend class due to COVID-related health issues. Students must complete the Panther Health Survey in order to be excused and receive such alternative assignments.

If you have a question, please visit forwardtogether.uni.edu or email it to 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