

Dear Quincy University community:

Today's message is the 105th update on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. And, hey, it's also the special Thanksgiving holiday edition!

Here's our review of the COVID-19 situation for the Quincy University community, as we near the end of the 2021 Fall Semester:

1. Because of requirements imposed by the State of Illinois, we continue to require COVID-19 testing for unvaccinated and partially vaccinated members of our community. Since our last COVID-19 update, two additional rounds of surveillance testing have been conducted for the relevant students, staff, and faculty, with over 200 tests administered. **All known test results were negative.** Some tests were conducted at off-campus testing sites and are not included in our totals.
2. **Fourteen students have tested positive for COVID-19 since the semester began.** One of those students took only online courses. Some of the remaining students did not have full-time course schedules on the QU campus. Any student with an active infection is quarantined, whether on or off campus. **There have been no active student cases at QU since our last COVID-19 email update.**
3. There have been **no recent cases of QU students in quarantine** for close contact with an infected person.
4. In the typical day QU is testing several students, faculty, and staff for COVID-19 because those community members report one or more COVID-19 symptoms, such as a headache or congestion. Most test results for such symptomatic testing are negative, but not all.
5. QU's current all-community vaccination rate is **83%**. We will update vaccination rates on occasion throughout this academic year, but the bottom line is that the great majority of QU students, faculty, and staff have been vaccinated. The remainder should have applied for exemptions or deferrals. We expect our vaccination rate to increase slightly between now and the end of the semester.
6. **All unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students, faculty, and staff are receiving separate information about weekly COVID-19 testing**, as now required by the State of Illinois. QU should have received completed **Vaccination Declination and Deferral Request** forms from all unvaccinated members of our community. Please direct questions about these forms and State of Illinois requirements to Dr. Tracy.
7. We know that some QU students may be required to participate in **COVID-19 surveillance testing provided through their local employers**

in Quincy or nearby communities. We ask all students to report their test results to Dr. Tracy.

8. For the current semester, we are aware of **two COVID-19 cases for QU faculty and five cases for staff**, including our business partners. **As of today, there are no active cases for faculty and staff.** Anyone with an active infection will be quarantined, and no one in off-campus quarantine is permitted to return to campus until that person's quarantine period is complete.

9. Faculty, staff, and business partner employees should continue to **seek out COVID-19 testing** when they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms. Those faculty, staff, and business partner employees seeking to arrange a rapid COVID-19 test on campus should contact Dr. Tracy directly.

10. By far, the best way to reduce our risk for COVID-19 infection and serious illness is vaccination. **Masking, distancing, and good hand hygiene** also can be important ways to reduce risk. All members of the QU community should continue to follow public health safety guidelines.

11. It is essential that students, faculty, and staff **report symptoms** of anything that might be COVID-19 as soon as possible. While some of us might be tempted to avoid reporting a symptom on the grounds that the symptom seems minor, a healthcare professional, not an individual student or employee, should make this determination. **There is no acceptable reason for failing to inform us about a medical symptom that might point to COVID-19.**

12. **If you intend for any reason to have a COVID-19 test** or you have taken a COVID-19 test not arranged by the university, no matter where you are living or visiting right now, **please contact Dr. Tracy** with the details of your situation.

13. New guidance regarding COVID-19 testing, safety, and quarantine protocols continues to be announced by federal, state, and county sources. Updates to our policies and procedures will be announced by email as those updates are available.

If you are a member of the QU community and have not read the previous update messages, you could search them out in your email folders or read them at <https://www.quincy.edu/coronavirus/>.

Local and State Reports on COVID-19 Cases

As background for our safety measures at QU, we continue to report local and statewide COVID-19 information to all members of our community. QU updates on COVID-19 cases are taken from the public reports of state and county agencies.

Effective October 31, 2021, **Adams County, Illinois**, no longer maintains a COVID-19 tracking dashboard. Information about COVID-19 cases in **Illinois**, including county-by-county reports, is available at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>. As of today, the State of Illinois COVID-19 website lists 159 deaths attributable to COVID-19 in Adams County, dating to the beginning of the pandemic.

Missouri reports its COVID-19 cases for the past seven days and does not provide daily updates to its COVID-19 summary. Information about COVID-19 in Missouri is available at <https://showmestrong.mo.gov/data/public-health/>.

Announcements

Recently, the federal government announced **new COVID-19 vaccination regulations** that affect students with majors in some **healthcare disciplines**, including **nursing**. These regulations also have the potential to affect students in some other courses and majors at QU. If you are a student for whom these regulations might be relevant, you have been or will be contacted by a representative of QU or Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing & Health Sciences. If you have concerns about any information you have received, Dr. Tracy can assist you in finding the guidance you need.

During 2021, most members of the QU community have received the original two-shot vaccination series with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, or the original one-shot dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccination. Much more recently, some of us, including President McGee and Dr. Tracy, have also received an additional **booster** shot of the vaccine. We encourage all members of the QU community to seriously consider vaccination and, for those who are vaccinated but have not had the booster, to seek out the booster shot. Dr. Tracy can answer questions about receiving the booster shot in Quincy.

The great majority of QU students are not on campus during this week's **Thanksgiving holiday break**. Thanks to QU's high COVID-19 vaccination rate and compliance with safety measures, the number of COVID-19 cases at QU has been low during the 2021 Fall Semester. However, COVID-19 cases have begun to increase in the Midwest over the past few weeks. While QU has not imposed any special COVID-19 requirements for students and employees returning to campus after Thanksgiving, we strongly encourage all members of our community to wear masks indoors during their travels and to take special care when interacting with those who have special risk factors related to COVID-19, including the elderly and

immunocompromised. Any member of our community who may have been exposed to a person testing positive for COVID-19 should contact Dr. Tracy -- before returning to campus -- for guidance about quarantine requirements. **During this holiday week, any community member who has one or more symptoms associated with COVID-19 should seek out COVID-19 testing without waiting for their return to campus. Those who return to campus and have one or more symptoms should immediately seek out COVID-19 testing from Dr. Tracy or a healthcare provider.** All COVID-19 test results should be reported immediately to Dr. Tracy.

Some of you may wonder during this vacation week, has there ever been a *Star Wars* Thanksgiving holiday special? Why, yes, there was. A two-hour *Star Wars* holiday special was broadcast in November 1978, which a very young President McGee watched during its one (and only) airing. The *Star Wars* special has been called the worst two hours of television ever, and President McGee still hasn't recovered from the childhood trauma of viewing the program. While it's nice to know *Star Wars* wanted to encourage giving thanks in some fashion, this terrible TV special made President McGee a permanent *Star Trek* fan.

Whether you are a fan of *Star Trek* -- President McGee hopes so -- or *Star Wars*, and assuming you observe the holiday, we hope you will take a moment to give thanks during Thanksgiving celebrations. There is much for which we at Quincy University should be thankful. Whatever your religious tradition, good resources exist online to help families incorporate prayer or reflection into any Thanksgiving observance. For Roman Catholics in the U.S., parishes offer a Thanksgiving Day mass, though Thanksgiving is not a Holy Day of Obligation.

Enjoy your turkey (or whatever), Hawks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian McGee, President

Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development