

Dear Quincy University community:

Today's message is the 107th update on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have now been producing these COVID-19 email updates since mid-2020, and we sincerely hope 2022 will be the last year in which President McGee and Dr. Tracy are sending out such messages. We do have other ways to give you vitally important information on science fiction, campus squirrels, and the joys of waffle consumption. For now, though, more email updates will be needed, and we anticipate you will be seeing the 108th update in the near future.

Here's our summary of the current COVID-19 situation for the Quincy University community:

1. Because of requirements imposed in August 2021 by the State of Illinois, all colleges and universities in the state, including QU, require weekly COVID-19 testing for unvaccinated and partially vaccinated members of our community. These requirements have not been changed and are still in effect for the 2022 Spring Semester. **Note:** Until we are told otherwise, a person is considered fully vaccinated if that person has received the two-shot vaccination series of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. A booster shot is not required for a person to be considered fully vaccinated (but see below).
2. **Since the end of the 2021 Fall Semester, QU is aware of 41 members of our community (students, faculty, and staff) who have tested positive for COVID-19.** Those 41 people who have had COVID-19 included both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
3. As is true nationally, those who were vaccinated generally had milder cases of COVID-19 than those who were unvaccinated. Because of COVID-19, one member of our community was hospitalized for a portion of the holiday break.
4. Those who took at-home COVID-19 tests over the holiday break and had a positive test result should report their positive test results to Dr. Tracy.
5. **All unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students, faculty, and staff will continue to receive separate information about their weekly COVID-19 testing.** Please direct questions about this State of Illinois requirement for weekly testing to Dr. Tracy.
6. We know that some QU students have been 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.

7. 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

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://coronavirus.illinois.gov/>. As of January 11, 2022, the state of Illinois lists 176 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

Since the last COVID-19 email update, we have learned a great deal about the Omicron variant of COVID-19. Generally, and as most of you have already read, the Omicron variant is more transmissible than other variants of the disease and is becoming the dominant version of COVID-19 in all parts of the United States. At QU, as has been the case around the world, the cases we have seen in the past few weeks have always included symptoms, though sometimes those symptoms are very mild. In addition, the symptoms generally have been more serious for the unvaccinated than the vaccinated. The people who are most at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are unvaccinated, older, and might have one or more health problems already. **COVID-19 continues to be a dangerous disease**, especially for the

unvaccinated. Vaccination with a **booster shot provides the greatest protection from serious illness.**

For now, **we expect the 2022 Spring Semester to look exactly like the 2021 Fall Semester.** We do not anticipate any changes in the academic schedule for the 2022 Spring Semester.

The State of Illinois continues to require that all students, faculty, and staff **either be vaccinated or qualify for a religious or medical exemption.** **Masks continue** to be required while indoors at QU, with exceptions for active eating and drinking.

The **quarantine guidelines** we receive from the federal government have changed in recent weeks, and those guidelines are complicated. Dr. Tracy will provide information specific to each individual situation when a member of the QU community needs to be quarantined.

In the next few weeks, **please continue to look for email messages from Dr. Tracy** about our **return-to-campus requirements**, including those specifically affecting many student-athletes. Many of you have already received such emails, and more will be coming your way. Briefly, if you are not fully vaccinated and are not yet on campus, **you will need to have a negative COVID-19 test to return to campus.** Please see messages from Dr. Tracy for more details.

Most members of the QU community received the original two-shot vaccination series with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, or the original one-shot dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. 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. **As noted above, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that vaccines are more effective against Omicron when a person also has had a booster.** We expect that boosters will eventually be required by the State of Illinois for those attending colleges and universities, though boosters are not yet mandated by Illinois or by QU.

In social settings, especially when you are not on the QU campus, **physical distancing** can be helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Remaining at least three feet apart is a good idea. Six feet of separation from other people is even better.

For those who have not already returned to the QU campus, 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 for guidance about quarantine requirements. 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.**

Today, we read, is National Milk Day. Whether you like to get your milk for cows, goats, or plants, we recommend celebrating the day with a glass of milk, some cheese, or a bowl of chocolate ice cream. Happily, President McGee has already had his first serving of ice cream for the day.

We hope all those who are taking a J-term course are enjoying their studies. We are excited to have everyone back in a few weeks, and to welcome our new students. Happy belated New Year, and we'll see you soon, Hawks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian McGee, President

Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development