

March 3, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Planning

Our summer planning group has met twice and has developed a list of COVID-19 mitigation policy statements for summer programs that we will review with the executive team, with the Vice-Chancellor's cabinet, and with Conference Services. We hope to have these policy statements finalized by this time next week. Conference Services will provide these policy statements to summer program directors. The programs will then outline their protocols for meeting our COVID-19 mitigation policies and submit them for review.

If you plan to have students or program participants on campus this summer, please contact Conference Services (conferences@sewanee.edu), if you have not already done so, to make arrangements. We need to have one point of contact for each program or office to ensure that you have all the information you need, and that we are able to assess and accommodate your needs. Thank you to those of you who raised your hands last week; for any on-campus summer activity, please coordinate with Conference Services.

COVID-19 Testing

We had good COVID-19 test results again last week. We ran 1,940 tests and had only two positives. That is a 0.10% positivity rate. The two positives were students, but they were returning to campus and were not in our general on-campus population. Our count restarts each week. So far we have not strained our quarantine and isolation capacity. See the University's testing results published daily on our [Daily COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

There were no employee positive tests last week — great job! Thank you for continuing to be mindful of the 3W's, our most powerful tool to combat the spread of this disease: [Wear your mask](#). Wash your hands. Watch your distance. It's important to follow good [COVID-19 protocols](#) both on campus *and off campus*, and [to continue to limit your social interactions](#).

Surveillance test results are available the day after testing, and you will receive a communication only if the results are positive. Remember that employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and who are working on campus may request to be tested by our team by calling 931.598.1010 (please do not show up at the Fowler test site unannounced). Employees who receive positive test results must work with their primary care providers to determine how to proceed and must follow University policies related to COVID-19 and sick leave.

Human Resources Update Regarding Vaccinations

The University recognizes that widespread vaccination is one of the best ways to prevent continued spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19; reduce the occurrence of serious illness and/or death due to COVID-19; and return the University and our communities to a level of operation similar to the one that existed prior to the pandemic. To better allow employees to

schedule vaccination appointments, the University will provide up to three paid hours for work time missed while receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. Employees will also receive one paid day off following the final shot prescribed by your vaccine's manufacturer, to allow recovery time from any potential symptoms due to an immune response. See the details on the [Human Resources website](#).

Student Gathering Sizes

Yesterday, the Dean of Students Office sent a notice to students about increasing gathering sizes. Beginning this Friday, March 5, the gathering size for pre-registered student organization events will increase to 100 persons, *outdoors*. Students (no faculty or staff at this time) also are allowed to attend outdoor athletic events, masked and distanced, of course. The gathering restrictions are being loosened because our students have done an incredible job holding themselves accountable and protecting the bubble. Hosting organizations are required to have 100% testing compliance from all members each week, and have no COVID-19 policy violations from the previous week. We are so pleased to be able to do this at a time when there are numerous reports of schools that have restricted students to their dorm rooms for weeks at a time due to COVID-19 outbreaks on their campuses. Our testing, tracing, quarantine and isolation protocols were critical to our success last semester, and continue to be successful this semester.

Other University News

Progress on DEI Initiatives: Last September, [in its historic statement](#), the Board of Regents called for the University to become a “model of diversity, of inclusion, of intellectual rigor, and of loving spirit in an America that rejects prejudice and embraces possibility.” Guided by the Regents’ resolve and vision, Vice-Chancellor Brigety laid out a [set of initiatives](#) against which we will measure the progress of our existing work and our new projects toward achieving those goals. [Roughly six months on, here is an update](#).

LACRELA: Sewanee has joined 60+ other institutions in the [Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance](#) (LACRELA). The alliance is a partnership with the [University of Southern California Race and Equity Center](#) and will host regular meetings, offer workshops for faculty and staff, and provide access to resources focused on racial equity solutions. Monthly three-hour workshops have already begun. Our membership gives us access to the center’s National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC), an expert-validated survey that measures belonging and inclusion, which has been administered to more than 500,000 students. Using the student survey as a guide, new surveys will gauge the workplace climate on campuses. Sewanee’s undergraduate students will be surveyed later this month, faculty will take surveys in 2022, and staff will be surveyed in 2023.

EQB Reflection & Response: Over the past three weeks, three College student gatherings, two colleague Zoom gatherings, multiple listening sessions with Dining and Facilities Management, and one School of Theology student Zoom gathering have been held. Elizabeth Wilson (Center for Leadership) and Cassie Meyer (Dialogue Across Difference/OCE) have gathered the data elicited during these events and presented it to the senior leadership yesterday. The next step will

be to share the data with everyone so we can begin the important work of clarifying our values together.

Advisory Committee on Alcohol and Narcotics (ACAN) In October, ACAN was convened to begin its work. I am pleased to report that ACAN presented to the vice-chancellor and the Board of Regents at their February meeting a framework to guide the development of a new alcohol and drug policy. Next, a working team chaired by Lisa Stephenson and Nicole Noffsinger-Frazier and composed of professional staff, faculty, and students will apply the new framework to the existing alcohol and drug policy and make recommendations for the new policy and procedures—paying particular attention to education and prevention. The tentative timeline indicates a draft in late spring. Thank you to Jay Fisher and Nicole Noffsinger-Frazier for co-chairing the committee and to all the committee members for their hard work on this important topic. [You can view the framework here.](#)

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost