

March 10, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

### **Planning**

Our summer planning group has developed a list of COVID-19 mitigation policy statements for summer programs. The list has been reviewed with the executive team, with the vice-chancellor's cabinet, and with Conference Services. 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](mailto: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.

### **COVID-19 Testing**

We had no student positive test results last week, and only one positive test result among employees, so the positivity rate was 0.05%. With about a third of the semester under our belts, we have not strained our quarantine and isolation capacity. See the University's testing results published daily on our [Daily COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

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.

### **Updates and Information Regarding Vaccinations**

The State of Tennessee has expanded eligibility for vaccinations, effective this week. The Office of Public Health sent an [announcement about the expansion](#) last week. And Public Health will conduct COVID-19 vaccine information sessions in the coming weeks to help employees learn more about available vaccines and to answer questions. [Learn more and view the scheduled sessions](#). Remember, if you have already been vaccinated and received the full series of shots required by your vaccine's manufacturer, uploading a copy of your documentation to [this portal](#) will help the Public Health Office know the percentage of the Sewanee community that remains susceptible to the virus.

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 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](#).

### **Other University News**

**Leadership Lab:** Sewanee is invested in supporting and strengthening faculty and staff who want to lead positive social change. The Center for Leadership is accepting applications for the next cohort of the [Leadership Lab](#), a nine-month leadership development program designed for University staff and faculty. Participants are provided with books, personal coaching, professional assessments, and other resources. The application deadline is March 17, one week from today.

**Staff Survey:** Tammy Elliott, co-chair of the Employee Advisory Committee, announced at the open staff meetings last week that the Employee Satisfaction Survey will be administered this spring. This survey was first administered six years ago and is scheduled for every three years. The survey gathers information regarding staff satisfaction in a number of areas, such as the nature of their work, supervision, coworkers, benefits, communication, and several other topics. By repeating the survey at regular intervals, we are able to track our progress. After reviewing the results of the 2015 and 2018 surveys, the University enhanced vacation accruals and starting wages for hourly employees, and revised the agendas for open staff meetings.

**Chief Diversity Officer Search Update:** As you know from Vice-Chancellor Brigety's email in late October, the University is hiring a vice provost for diversity, equity, and inclusion who will serve as the University's chief diversity officer and oversee a new Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Many of you filled out a survey and participated in listening sessions in December and January regarding the skills you prioritize in this position, and your hopes for and concerns about the position. The search committee will use this feedback as we begin to review applications. We hope to narrow the field of applicants at the end of this month in anticipation of finalist interviews sometime in April. The University has contracted with Storbeck Search to assist with this search; the same firm brought us Vice-Chancellors McCardell and Brigety, Lee Ann Backlund, David Shipps, and others.

**Thank You:** I receive several emails each week thanking me for taking the time to share information and news. I am happy to do it, but I cannot take all the credit. Parker Oliver, Laurie Saxton, and Buck Butler are integral to the process. They help me not only by suggesting topics to cover, but by actually writing some of them. They do research to ensure the information in my emails is accurate, and they correct and improve my diction and punctuation. At the same time, they allow some of my voice to come through. It is a collaborative effort and I am grateful for their assistance and their support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost