

March 31, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

### **Planning**

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. You'll need to outline your COVID-19 mitigation plans for review. It is not an onerous task, but we need to ensure that you are fully aware of our summer policies.

And yes, this includes individual offices that have employed students for the summer or have student interns, and faculty who have student researchers and interns. Please contact Conference Services. They can guide you through the process.

While it is still too early to know exactly what the fall will look like, given the wide availability of the vaccines we expect a substantial return to normalcy. But even with wide vaccine distribution, we may need to continue to take precautions such as masking and distancing in the classroom. We will continue to pay close attention to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control.

### **COVID-19 Testing**

Another 1,821 tests were administered last week. Two students tested positive. That is a 0.11% positivity rate. With more than half 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](#).

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.

### **Updated Vaccination Information**

As noted last week, all Tennessee residents ages 16 and up will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination no later than April 5, and residents aged 55 and older are eligible now. This is incredibly exciting and encouraging. Widespread vaccination is one of the best ways to prevent continued spread of COVID-19 and return the University to a standard mode of operation.

You may have seen [this announcement](#) that went out to students last Friday. The University Wellness Center this week has received 200 doses of the Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccine and begins vaccinating students today. UHS will be able to order additional doses for students on a weekly basis. On Monday, April 5, the University will also provide bus transportation to Walgreens in Decherd for up to 100 students to receive Moderna vaccinations. Should the University be able to schedule a vaccination event on campus specifically for employees, we will let you know. To learn more about the development, safety, and efficacy of the available vaccines, remember to complete the online training module in [Brightspace](#) (offered in person in some departments).

Vaccines are available at all county health departments as well as through a variety of local pharmacies and community providers. To find a vaccination site near Sewanee, use [vaccinefinder.org](#). Remember that the University will provide up to three paid hours for work time missed while receiving a COVID-19 vaccination to better allow employees to schedule vaccination appointments. 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 details on the [Human Resources website](#).

Also announced last week, [fully vaccinated](#) employees will no longer be required to participate in COVID-19 testing. They will also no longer be required to quarantine in the event of an exposure, as long as they remain asymptomatic. Remember, you are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after your second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. In order to be eligible to discontinue COVID-19 testing, a record of your vaccination must be submitted to Sewanee's public health team via [vaccine.sewanee.edu](#). This HIPAA-compliant survey requires the date you completed your vaccination series, and a photo of your CDC-issued vaccination record card. If you have trouble completing the survey or submitting your documentation, please contact [philip.loyd@sewanee.edu](mailto:philip.loyd@sewanee.edu). Until these requirements are met, we ask that you continue testing as required.

You may have heard that [Rutgers University](#) announced last week that it will require the vaccine for its on-campus students in the fall. While Rutgers is requiring students to be vaccinated, there are exceptions for disability and religious beliefs. Since the vaccines became available, we have been in conversation about requiring vaccination for students and employees. The vaccines are currently approved only for emergency use. Food and Drug Administration guidance is that a vaccine with EUA (Emergency Use Authorization) status should be voluntary. If the EUA status changes or if states require vaccination for COVID-19 as they do for other diseases, an institution's legal risk in making the vaccination mandatory is minimized. We will continue to keep a close eye on this situation.

As you can see from all of the updates above, available information and guidance changes quickly. We will do our best to update our practices with the changing landscape and to keep you updated.

### **Other University News**

**University-Sponsored International Travel:** The Office of Global Citizenship and the Provost's Office have provided updated information about University-sponsored international

travel. After the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally during spring 2020, the University halted all University-funded international travel by faculty, staff, and students. Pending review and approval by the risk advisory committee (applications can be made using the [International Travel Authorization Request](#)), the University will authorize requests for international travel using University funding. In its review of international travel applications, the risk advisory committee will assess the safety of travel to a country based on State Department travel advisory levels, recent COVID-19 caseload levels and trends, and the medical infrastructure of the target country.

Those who wish to travel abroad should also be aware that many countries have travel restrictions in place, which may include proof of a negative COVID-19 test, proof of being fully vaccinated, required COVID-19 testing on arrival, and mandatory quarantines. Prior to spending funds on international travel, employees should first research entry requirements and whether international travel is, in fact, feasible. For assistance with entry requirements and visas, you can contact Abby Colbert. Even if travel is authorized by the risk advisory committee, travel, particularly during a pandemic, involves risk and is undertaken at the risk of those traveling. The advisory committee will not review personal travel plans.

**Biehl Commons:** I hope you had a chance to see my email yesterday giving an update on our planning for Biehl Commons, the new student-centered commons coming to the current site of Thompson Union. On March 16, the program planning committee held an open forum during which the project architects outlined the results of the schematic design phase of planning.

During that meeting, we discussed a possible expansion of the project's scope to include an outdoor terrace space. The opportunities this space would offer suggested that we explore the possibility of taking down the walls of the SUT to create a large outdoor student gathering space for a variety of activities and events (including possibly an outdoor movie theater space). Attendance at the SUT has dropped over the past several years as more of us are streaming entertainment; there were fewer than 25 patrons per night, on average, during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years.

The program planning committee is enthusiastic about this possibility, as were most of the forum participants. Such an expansion would support and expand functional entertainment, recreation, and gathering spaces for students. This terrace is not currently a part of the project scope, and a decision about including it in the scope has not yet been made. We wanted to ensure that the possibility of removing the SUT is widely understood and to garner additional feedback beyond the group that was able to attend the forum. You can use [this form](#) to comment.

**Recent Campus Incidents:** As of March 30, the investigation is continuing into the March 13 incident involving spectators who were reported to have used racist language at an athletic event. When the investigation is concluded, the findings will be presented to the appropriate university personnel.

On the night of Friday, March 26, the Sewanee Police Department received reports via LiveSafe of vandalism occurring in All Saints' Chapel. Officers were dispatched immediately and arrived within minutes. As of March 30, an investigation into the vandalism is ongoing. The items damaged include small stained glass windows in two exterior doors, two exterior lights, a decorative case, and a candelabra, among other items. The Facilities Management Department is

working to ascertain the cost of the damage. The vandalism will not have any effect on Holy Week services, and All Saints' Chapel will remain open as usual.

**Thank You:** I want to extend another heartfelt thank you to everyone who moved so quickly at the end of last week to plan, prepare, and execute a program to vaccinate our students beginning this week and going forward. This is incredibly exciting and much more involved than one might imagine. This dedicated group includes our University Wellness Center staff, Karen Tharp, Nysha Wallace, and public health officials Mariel Gingrich and Dr. Mary Heath, as well as Nicole Noffsinger-Frazier and Lauren Goodpaster in the Dean of Students Office. Special thanks to Dickie McCarthy in the Athletic Department who made arrangements for the bus service.

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost