

May 26, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

#MakeItToMay

The academic year is officially over. Commencements went off without a hitch in a whole new style—outdoors at Hardee-McGee Field. You can read summaries of the [College](#) and [School of Theology](#) Commencements, and see photos and videos from the ceremonies.

And now what? *Take a break!* Many of us have put off vacations and downtime for the past year. We sprinted our way through a marathon, and now we need to rest and recover, both individually and as an institution. I am hopeful that the summer will provide a respite. Please encourage and support others as they take time away to recharge.

Planning

I hope by now you are all aware that if you plan to have student interns, students, or program participants on campus this summer and have not already done so, you need to contact Conference Services (conferences@sewanee.edu) to make arrangements. You'll need to outline your COVID-19 mitigation plans. Given the number of protocols that have been submitted, it looks like we'll have a very busy summer!

Summer school begins in less than two weeks, with most classes in person, and we are planning for a mostly normal fall semester. We expect that by June 28, campus buildings will return to normal (pre-pandemic) summer occupancy, and students and faculty should plan to be back in classrooms in the fall. We are not planning to have any travel or visitor restrictions in place for the Domain, and we expect to have a full slate of lectures, concerts, social activities, and athletic competitions. At this point, the demonstrated safety of the classroom and the wide availability of vaccines make this a viable and safe assumption. Many of our peer institutions are making similar plans. We hope that most students, faculty, and staff will be vaccinated by the fall, and we will continue to pay close attention to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control.

You are probably aware that [many colleges and universities](#) have announced that they will require the vaccine for their on-campus students in the fall, generally with some religious and medical exemptions. We have been asked why we are not making the same requirement for our students. I provided specific detailed information on this topic a couple weeks ago. No decision has been made about whether the University will require students to be vaccinated. We are keeping a close eye on this issue as information is changing pretty quickly; I'll update you every few weeks.

Vaccination Information

Even though at this point we are not requiring that students or employees be vaccinated, we strongly encourage you to receive a vaccination. The available vaccines have been proven safe and effective.

Once you have been vaccinated, please enter your information into [our database](#). Currently, we've received almost 400 total records of employee vaccinations. [Fully vaccinated](#) employees (with records submitted) are no longer required to quarantine in the event of an exposure as long as they remain asymptomatic. This is a HIPAA-compliant survey that requires the date you completed your vaccination series, Banner ID, 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.

Remember that the University provides up to three paid hours for work time missed while receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, as well as one paid day off following the final shot to allow recovery time from any symptoms due to an immune response. See details on the [Human Resources website](#).

Updated Masking Requirement

The University masking policy is now as follows, in response to the [CDC's most recent guidance](#):

- *While outdoors:* Masks are not required, regardless of vaccination status, unless otherwise indicated by the University.
- *While indoors:* Gatherings of vaccinated individuals do not require masking, unless otherwise indicated by the University. Masking may be required for indoor events or gatherings where the vaccination status of attendees is not known.

Please note: CDC guidance also states, "If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may *not* be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking all precautions." Given the fluid nature of recent CDC guidance, the University's masking directive may be adjusted again. Please check the [University's COVID-19 website](#) for the most up-to-date details.

COVID-19 Testing

The Public Health Office will be happy to provide testing services if you are feeling symptomatic with possible COVID-19, or need documentation of a negative test to travel. In either case, please email publichealth@sewanee.edu to coordinate. 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.

Other University News

Campus Dining: The hours and operations of campus dining venues will change for the summer. (What a nice change from last summer's total closures.) Evening and weekend hours at Stirling's will vary depending on when summer programs are running, but Stirling's will remain open on weekdays for those of us working on campus. McClurg will be open *only* for students and summer program participants. The Cup and Gown is closed for the summer.

Thank You: In the past I have asked you to thank our students for doing their part to make this year work. Now I'm asking that you thank community members and their families for helping us #ProtectTheBubble and #MakeItToMay. They made sacrifices, too. There were no complaints when we closed duPont Library, the Fowler Center, and the Sewanee Inn. They complied with the masking directive and the prohibition on short-term rentals. Many volunteered at the COVID-19 testing site and assisted with other initiatives designed to support our students. Town and Gown truly came together throughout the pandemic. We could not have made it through this without one another. Please take a moment to show them your appreciation.

Sincerely,

Nancy