

Subject: College of Sciences Monday Matters: Returning to Campus Safely

Date: Sunday, August 16, 2020 at 11:05:48 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Dodge, Gail

To: Dodge, Gail

Dear Colleagues:

In two weeks the fall semester will begin and we will be back in the classroom, whether virtual or face-to-face (or both at once). A lot of planning has gone into preparing for a safe return to campus. Many taskforces and working groups have worked over the summer to think through the details. I am sure you are already aware of the changes taking place in classrooms, department offices, and other public spaces, including hand sanitizer stations, hands-free paper towel dispensers, new technology for teaching, and lots of signage around campus. I want to highlight three other aspects of our planning in this message.

First, Student Engagement and Enrollment Services (SEES) has implemented a comprehensive communication strategy with our students to build a culture of safety and compliance about wearing masks and social distancing. Every student in a f2f class is well aware of the new rules, has agreed to abide by them, and has pledged to support those rules with their peers. Some students may forget to bring a mask at first and so it is important for us to bring extra disposable masks to the classroom. I believe your Chairs have circulated some suggested language that you can use to talk with students who are not wearing a mask. The key is not to assume the worst as a starting point and not to escalate the situation unnecessarily.

Secondly, if you haven't already done so, please sign-up and do the daily symptom tracking available through the myODU portal. Once you've signed up you'll receive a daily email reminder. It is important for us to monitor what is happening in the ODU community. If you have symptoms, additional information is available to you.

Finally, I want you to be aware that ODU is standing up a COVID test analysis lab so we do not have to rely on outside entities to process the nasal swabs. It is hard to overstate the importance of this development. Testing will begin on August 22nd, for students moving in to dorms. At that time ODU will have the capacity to analyze 300 swabs per week. The plan is to test all students with symptoms and then randomly test students to reach the 15% testing goal. After that, testing will be available for members of the ODU community who have symptoms. Since the tests will be analyzed at ODU, we will be able to get results back in a timely way. Although our capacity will be limited at first, additional equipment will be delivered to enable us to greatly increase our testing capacity. I think we will all end up being extremely happy that ODU has invested the necessary resources so that we can analyze these tests on site.

Let's continue to keep the lines of communication open and work together to make this fall semester a success, despite the pandemic challenges. The precautions and safeguards implemented by ODU will benefit all of us as we provide an excellent education to our students.

Best Regards,
Gail

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