

# September COVID-19 Update

Dean Students, Faculty, and Staff,

In our fourth week of classes, I'd like to provide you with a COVID-19 update.

From mid-August to mid-September, we've had 158 reported positive student cases (approximately 30 cases a week) and 37 reported positive employee cases. At the moment, we have 16 student and five employee cases in the 5-10 day recovery period. Students are notifying Student Life and employees are notifying Human Resources when they test positive and people are then receiving information about the recovery period. This information on the steps to follow is also available on the [Path Forward](#) website. I'll be sending COVID-19 update messages every few weeks and I'll be sure to include case count information in these messages.

Below are a few important notes about masks, rapid tests, and vaccination.

## **Masks**

Individuals should keep a mask with them in the event that you are asked to wear a mask or enter a space where a mask is required (e.g. office, classroom). KN95 masks are available in a variety of spaces on campus (Student Health Services, Office of Student Life-Cro 218, Human Resources, Dean of the Faculty Office, Unity House, Harris Dining Hall and Shain Library Circulation Desk).

## **Rapid Tests**

Rapid tests are available:

- For students: In Student Health Services (Warnshuis) and the Office of Student Life (Cro 218)
- For employees: In Human Resources (Strickland House), the Dean of the Faculty Office (Fanning 203) and the Office of Student Life (Cro 218)

We currently have a large supply of tests given that the state of Connecticut provided us with tests last spring. These tests will expire at the end of October (2022). We have additional tests with later expiration dates, but this stock is more limited.

At the moment, we are dispensing a lot of tests every week and we surmise that it is because people are repeatedly testing when they are notified they are a close contact. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that you should only test in the following two circumstances:

- If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19
- If you are identified as a close contact, test roughly five to six days after your last exposure (do not test repeatedly)

I will remind the campus community about this in future messages, but I mention it here to reinforce that we do not have an endless supply of tests for an indefinite period of time, so it is important to begin to adjust everyone's expectations for the future.

## **Vaccination**

As you may have heard, there is now an updated COVID-19 booster vaccine from both Moderna and Pfizer that has recently been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These boosters are “bivalent,” meaning they protect against two strains of the COVID-19 virus – in this case, the original COVID-19 strain and the newer omicron variant. Updated COVID-19 boosters can both help restore protection that has decreased since previous vaccination, and provide broader protection against newer variants. The bivalent boosters target the most recent Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, that are more contagious and more resistant than earlier strains of Omicron. The Pfizer bivalent booster is approved for those age 12 or over and the Moderna version for those age 18 or over. More details about vaccines can be found on the [CDC](#) website.

The College **strongly encourages** all eligible members of the campus community to get the bivalent booster. The College is currently not requiring the booster, but it is **highly recommended** given the residential nature of our campus community.

The College is coordinating with Hartford HealthCare to offer a booster clinic on campus, but this is not confirmed yet. If we are able to host a clinic, it will likely occur in early to mid-November. Given the clinic is not yet confirmed, you are encouraged to get the booster on your own. Vaccines are readily available in the area – the easiest way to find a site is to use the national [VaccineFinder](#) website. Students can use various transportation

options to access vaccination sites in the region (please visit the [Conn Transportation](#) website for more details).

In addition to the COVID-19 booster, it is also important to receive the flu vaccine. Student Health Services will host a flu vaccine clinic for students on Tuesday, October 4 from 11:00am to 3:00pm in front of Warnshuis (no appointment is needed).

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. I hope you enjoy the beautiful fall weather in the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'VA', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Victor Arcelus  
Dean of Students