

Suffolk County Community College

College Brief

NO. 45 December 22, 2021

TO: The College Community

FROM: Dr. Edward Bonahue
 President

SUBJECT: Implementation of Safe Start Task Force Recommendations

As we reach the final week of the fall semester, COVID-19 stubbornly continues to negatively impact Suffolk County and its residents. As you know, the positivity rate is increasing daily, and as we go into the Christmas weekend, I wanted to update you on how the college is closely monitoring the current spike in COVID cases and planning for the weeks ahead.

Following Monday's Safe Start Task Force meeting, I received several recommendations for action reflecting the consensus of that group, and I am approving the steps below for implementation at this time. Please note that further steps may be taken if conditions change and as we gain a greater understanding of the pandemic's Omicron spread. I hope everyone will continue to check their email to ensure continued awareness of what is happening during this time of uncertainty.

1. Instead of having all employees resume 100% on-campus staffing on January 3rd, employees currently using alternating on-campus work schedules may continue the practice through January 21, 2022, to keep population density nearer to 75%. We'll continue to monitor and reassess this practice on a weekly basis, and a decision to continue or end the practice can be determined as conditions change.
2. The abbreviated winter class schedule is now completely remote. The spring 2022 class schedule will remain as is for now, and we will continue to monitor public health conditions in our region to assess what further action (pivoting to remote) may be necessary.
3. Please bear in mind the possibility that we may need (or be directed by SUNY) to pivot to more remote instruction in order to reduce campus density. If this decision or direction is made, Academic Chairs would need to be ready to reschedule some instruction to one of the College's three online modalities, perhaps just for a limited period. At this time, I ask Academic Chairs to begin considering what areas could appropriately pivot (or not pivot) to remote instruction (perhaps along the same lines as the plans made for spring 2021). Additionally, if positivity rates continue to rise, we may explore the possibility of reducing in-person classroom capacity (in January) for spring from 100% to 75% as we had done in the fall.

4. Instructional Technology Services staff are being asked to prepare college laptops in case we must pivot to remote teaching and learning. Additionally, we are requesting that staff begin planning for the reassignment of soft phones in order to support delivery of remote services.
5. The Safe Start Task Force and representatives from Student Affairs are already discussing how the College will address new students (admissions and advising) in January.

It would be beyond obvious to note how we have all been hoping for a return to full-scale family gatherings, travel, and relaxing with friends. However, this is not the time for anyone to take down their guard when it comes to health and wellness. So at the risk of being even more obvious, let me also remind everyone of the following:

1. **COVID-19 Vaccination:** I continue to strongly encourage faculty, staff and students to protect themselves and their loved ones by completing the vaccination and booster process as soon as possible. If you plan to become vaccinated but do not yet have an appointment, you can find locations near you by accessing [this link](#)—simply type in your zip code for a list of pharmacies and other locations that can be found within a short drive.
2. **COVID-19 Testing:** A [comprehensive testing calendar](#) currently provides testing opportunities for everyone on campus. Non-vaccinated employees, as well as those employees who did not submit documentation of their full vaccination status, continue to be required to participate in [weekly](#) COVID-19 testing. And frequent testing will help keep all the important people in your life safe. Free testing is available for all faculty and staff at these locations:
 - [Ammerman Campus](#): Kreiling Hall-Room 207B
 - [Michael J. Grant Campus](#): Captree Commons-Room 113
 - [Eastern Campus](#): Peconic Building-Shark Tank (1st floor)
3. **Face coverings/masks on campus:** Face coverings/masks continue to be required in all college buildings, classrooms labs, offices, and common spaces, as well as crowded outdoor settings.
4. **Social Distancing:** Everyone is encouraged to maintain appropriate physical distancing whenever possible.
5. **COVID-positive notification:** All employees should continue to monitor themselves for possible symptoms of COVID-19. If you do not feel well, please do not come to work. COVID-positive employees must notify Human Resources of their status by emailing covid@sunysuffolk.edu. They should not report to work, and must self-isolate per CDC directives.

I want the college community to know that the administration and the Safe Start Task Force continue to closely monitor the region's COVID-19 numbers, and at my request, the Task Force

has now resumed meeting on a weekly basis. Again, I encourage everyone to periodically check their email over the break—especially if you are not teaching during Wintersession—as conditions could require the college to once again take quick action.

As always, I thank you for your efforts in working together to ensure that those around us are safe and everyone remains healthy. I also wish the happiest of holidays to you and your families.