



## COVID-19 Update

August 13, 2021

*Dear Mitchell College Community Stakeholders,*

As we prepare for the opening of the 2021–22 academic year, we write today with some updates about arrival plans for students, campus operations, and protocols regarding our continued management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We anticipate a return to campus life that more closely resembles the Mitchell College experience we have all come to appreciate. While we continue to be encouraged by the rate of COVID-19 vaccination in the state and among members of the Mitchell College community, we must remain vigilant as variants in the virus pose new questions for us to consider and respond to.

As we have throughout the COVID pandemic, we are taking several actions to create the best possible living, learning, and working environment. In our decision-making on policies and procedures, we are guided by the following values and principles:

- Priority for the health, safety, and well-being of faculty, staff, students, and campus partners.
- Using guidance and recommendations by the CDC, State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, our local Ledge Light Health District, as well as public health and infectious disease experts in our Northeast Medical Group.
- Ensuring the continued fulfillment of our academic mission and prioritizing the experiences that support it.

To that end, we are sharing these updates and reminders with you as we prepare for the Fall 2021 semester.

**Face Coverings and Physical-Distancing Protocols**

We remain highly concerned about the transmissibility of the COVID-19 virus and variants. Recent information from the CDC indicates that the COVID-19 Delta variant has been transmitted among vaccinated people in highly dense social settings. The latest information from the CDC strongly recommends face coverings be worn indoors in regions where the COVID-19 virus is being substantially transmitted. As of July 28, New London County is classified as one of those locations.

Given this guidance, we are requiring **face coverings to be worn for all indoor activities and in common areas** (classrooms, event spaces, and hallways) except when alone, such as in a private office or in college sponsored housing. Student-sponsored social events that are not supervised by a college employee require face coverings for all indoor activities, and participants will be limited to avoid densely packed spaces. Limitations will be based on ensuring three-foot distance between participants.

Given the increased transmission of variants of COVID-19, face coverings will now be **required for all attendees at outdoor college- and student-sponsored events and gatherings**. We have made this change out of an abundance of caution and it will remain in effect for the foreseeable future.

**While going about daily outdoor activities**, members of our community are **not required to wear face coverings** at this time.

### **Dining**

We are working with Chartwells, our dining services provider, to finalize our approach for maintaining health and safety in our dining facilities and will provide an update in a future communication as we continue to monitor CDC and state Department of Public Health guidance.

### **Working, Living, and Studying on Campus Required COVID Vaccination**

As all of you know, students are required to be vaccinated in order to be on campus. Please upload your vaccination card to the **CoVerified App** or [healthservices@mitchell.edu](mailto:healthservices@mitchell.edu) and include your full name and date of birth, the name of the facility that administered the vaccine, and the date the vaccine was given.

It is essential that you submit proof of vaccination prior to your return to campus. **Students must complete this step by August 15.** A small number of our faculty, staff, and students are unvaccinated and will be required to be tested weekly.

Vaccination is the strongest tool we have to mitigate the spread of COVID variants and reduce the severity of symptoms for most who contract the virus. Your efforts in this area will allow our community to return to an in-person experience that has far fewer restrictions than we had this past year.

### **COVID-19 Testing at Mitchell College**

As vaccination rates increase within our community, **vaccinated students and employees will not need to be tested.** Health and Wellness will be testing

unvaccinated students who have exemptions, unvaccinated employees and those not fully vaccinated, and we will announce the testing schedule shortly. Any student who feels ill can call Health and Wellness to be tested. Employees who do not feel well should remain home and seek assistance from their healthcare provider. Health and Wellness will not be testing vaccinated employees.

*Please note: All students, faculty, and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are required to monitor and submit symptoms daily via CoVerified.*

### **Student Arrival and Move-In**

Students will begin to arrive on campus on August 18. ***Students who have not uploaded their vaccination card or who have not been granted an exemption will not be allowed on campus.***

***\*\*As part of arrival, all students will be required to submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test (PCR or Antigen) that was administered within 72 hours prior to their arrival on campus to the CoVerified App or [healthservices@mitchell.edu](mailto:healthservices@mitchell.edu).\*\****

Students who are unvaccinated and have an approved exemption will be tested on campus in the first week. Vaccinated students will not be tested.

We are asking that **all students and family members wear face coverings while inside residence halls during move-in. No more than two family members are allowed to assist with move-in**, and they do not need to present a negative COVID-19 test. We strongly encourage family members to be vaccinated if they plan to be present on campus.

### **Visitors to Campus**

Visitors and invited guests are welcome on campus; ***visitors must wear face coverings indoors*** and at ***outdoor college- and student-sponsored events and gatherings.***

### **Looking Ahead**

The college continues to monitor the transmission rates in the region and the spread of the Delta variant. As always, we are guided by the State of Connecticut's policies and recommendations, as well as recommendations from public health and infectious disease experts and organizations. Safety, health, and well-being remain our all-important guiding principles as we make decisions about policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

**Erik M. Costa**

Director of Campus Safety

Covid-19 Coordinator

**Questions?** Please visit [mitchell.edu/fall-2021](https://mitchell.edu/fall-2021) or contact [communications@mitchell.edu](mailto:communications@mitchell.edu).

