Cardinal Faculty,

As many of you prepare for the first day of classes next week, I want to thank you again for your dedication and hard work while we all continue navigating the challenges of the pandemic. Without you, our core mission of ensuring student success and making UofL a great place to learn wouldn’t be possible.

Bringing students back to campus and re-establishing a sense of belonging here are our educational imperatives. We will continue to meet those imperatives while prioritizing healthy and safe campus operations this semester. I am encouraged by the increased vaccination rates: our student vaccination rate has moved up to 54 percent and our employee vaccination rate has moved up to 70 percent.

Additionally, more guidance and a few clarifications have been posted to the Faculty tab of the COVID-19 website and the Faculty FAQs to support you with the semester ahead. Go to the Faculty tab for full details, but here are the highlights:

- **Seating charts:** Faculty who teach classes in spaces that cannot accommodate physical distancing are strongly encouraged to create seating charts and have students follow their assigned seating for the semester. This will ensure the contact tracing team can quickly contact any unvaccinated students who were exposed to a student who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

- **Quarantine:** Students who are vaccinated and were sitting less than 6 feet away from a student who tests positive for COVID-19 will not have to quarantine when an exposure happens. For more details, review the Quarantine, Symptoms & Sickness FAQs.

- **Teaching mode may not be changed** after a course has been scheduled and posted; thus, in-person courses must meet in person. Online tools may certainly be used for things such as virtual breakout sessions or group collaboration assignments, but faculty may not schedule remote synchronous classes for an in-person course unless that is part of the faculty member’s continuity of instruction plan for when they themselves are experiencing symptoms or instructed to quarantine or isolate. As stated in Section 4.3.1.B of the university Redbook, “...Temporary absence from residency for faculty members during the period when their contract requires them to be in residence shall be arranged in accordance with regulations of the unit. Each faculty member is responsible for the conduct of assigned courses and is required to meet such classes and make such assignments as will fulfill the intent of the courses.”

- **Faculty should provide options for making up work** when students abide by the university's health and safety protocols by staying home when they have COVID-
19 symptoms, when they’ve been instructed by the health department or contact tracers to quarantine due to exposure, or when they are isolating due to a positive test. Faculty should not require doctors’ notes for these types of intermittent absences from classes. Faculty may, however, request medical documentation if a student misses a major assessment or exam. Refer to the Delphi Center’s very helpful guide, Supporting Students in Quarantine, and the Faculty tab for more resources and examples of providing make-up work options.

Remember, if you run into questions or concerns with any aspect of the university’s COVID-19 response, please reach out to your department chair and dean for further guidance or contact the Business Operations COVID Support Team. This team of dedicated staff are ready to quickly assist all university members with their questions and they will document any concerns or complaints. They also evaluate patterns that arise from the calls and messages they receive to assist with the university’s continued COVID-19 response.

I hope you all have a restful weekend and I look forward to starting the semester with you next week.

Take care,

Lori

Lori Stewart Gonzalez
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