

Subject: UofL continues in-person classes for spring semester

Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 4:52:46 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: UofL Update

To: UofL Update

Cardinal Community,

As we enter the spring semester together, we understand the mixed feelings students, faculty and staff are experiencing and want to be clear about the university's plan for addressing the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

After careful, ongoing review and significant discussion of the issues Omicron presents, we plan to continue in-person instruction and normal business operations this semester. The reasons for this include:

- More than 91 percent of our students, faculty and staff have been vaccinated (the vast majority being fully vaccinated). Many have also received their booster shot, and we are working to gain access to those numbers.
- The risk of severe illness to fully vaccinated individuals from contracting COVID remains very low (and even lower to boosted individuals). Research shows that the Omicron variant causes less severe disease than previous variants.
- Academic performance and mental well-being were negatively impacted when we moved to remote delivery in the past. In-person instruction has proven to be more effective for students and safe for faculty and students alike when health protocols are followed. (An Indiana University study has shown that COVID transmission was lower when students took more in-person classes, and the CDC has compiled other studies that support this finding.)

The [health and safety protocols](#) we have in place have served our university community well over the last few years and have allowed us to safely navigate this pandemic. We will continue to lean into our protocols during yet another difficult surge of the pandemic. For the small number of Cardinals who remain unvaccinated, their next [required testing period](#) begins January 10.

Additionally, the university is providing two [KN95 masks](#) to all faculty, staff and students who want them. All colleges and schools are receiving direct deliveries and the [Campus Procedures](#) section of the COVID-19 website outlines the various mask distribution locations where students can pick up their own mask on campus this week.

Omicron will continue to increase positivity rates, and we will continue to evaluate and adjust, if necessary. We've been through surges before and it's likely that they will happen again in the future. Together, we can and must continue to coexist with the pandemic. We will continue to keep the COVID-19 Dashboard updated and keep you informed of any changes we need to make to our plans.

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