

Subject: To Faculty from Provost Boehm: Face masks and reminders
Date: Monday, August 17, 2020 at 7:18:36 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: UofL Update
To: UofL Update
Attachments: FINAL Face Coverings in class - Response Guide 8.14.20 edits.docx, 20.08.14 provost note to students final.docx

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back. I know that your usual fall excitement at returning to campus is tempered by anxiety about what it will be like to teach our students during a pandemic. I get it. I've fielded lots of questions this last week about the first week of classes, but one I've had more than any other is about masks: What do I do if my student (or my colleague, or a staff member, or a professor) won't wear a mask?

In my 33 years as a faculty member at UofL, I have never had a student refuse to do something that I've politely asked them to do. I've had some difficult discussions with students for sure, but I've always worked hard to create a civil classroom environment, and educational research (as well as personal experience) shows that if we treat students with respect, they will return that respect; if we meet our students with trust, they will most often show themselves to be trustworthy.

So what should you do if a student refuses to wear a mask? I've attached the most recent policy (which modifies the Classroom Disruption Policy for masking), but here is a cheat sheet:

- Don't immediately assume ill intent on the student's part, and don't politicize mask-wearing. Politely remind them of the policy requiring them to wear a mask: point to the syllabus statement on masking and signs on the walls of your classroom. If a student says they forgot their mask, tell them where they can get one (Houchens or the SAC on Belknap or from their academic department at HSC) during the first week of classes; they will be able to purchase masks in the bookstore, and I put a plastic bag with a few disposable masks in my bookbag to take with me to class in case students forget theirs). There will also be Campus Health peer ambassadors, called "MASKots," handing out masks to students who forgot them during the first week of class; they should be wearing green vests so they will be easy to spot. Invite an unmasked student to go get a mask, and then welcome them back to the classroom.
- If a student says they have an exemption from wearing a mask, they should produce a letter from the DRC; you will also be notified by the DRC, and your dean will be copied. But please know that as of Friday, no students have been given an exemption by the DRC. That could change during the first weeks of class, but the modification for not being able to wear a mask will most often be that the student can take the class remotely.
- You should always attempt to deescalate the situation: if a student refuses to leave the class after being told they must wear a mask, you should tell them about the revised Student Code of Conduct: <http://louisville.edu/dos/students/codeofconduct>. Section 8 is about learning in a pandemic and states that students must adhere to public health policies, including wearing masks, or they can be reported to the Dean of Students for violating the Code of Conduct.
- You can also enlist the support of your department chair or someone from the dean's office to

invite the student in for a conversation: I expect very few students will require this level of attention to be persuaded to wear a mask. See the attached policy for a fuller list of suggestions.

- Finally, let's be the example to our students: don't angrily "confront" our colleagues, staff members or students who aren't wearing masks. Instead, politely call upon them to show that they will protect themselves and others in our Cardinal community by wearing their masks. I've had several students and staff members email me this week to complain about faculty not wearing their masks in the hallways and public spaces of our academic and research buildings. If we pay more attention to our own compliance with the mask policy, we will have to worry less about how to report others.

Two other start of semester reminders:

1. I've also attached the letter that went out to students on Friday, which includes a reminder for them to email any instructors who haven't yet told students where to show up on the first day. If you are a faculty member who hasn't done that, please make sure you do it now, prior to your first class.
2. If you haven't gotten your free COVID 19 test, you have until Aug. 21 to do so. We are urging all faculty, staff and students to get tested so that we know the baseline rate of infection in the Cardinal community. We have several testing sites on the Belknap and HSC campuses, so the process should be convenient and relatively quick, and you only need your ID and insurance card (but there is no charge). I got tested this week, and it was fast and painless. Register here for your free test: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040445a5a622a6fa7-bluewater1>

Thank you to all of you who will be helping our students learn this semester, whether in person or virtually. I hope to see many of you walking across campus this fall, physically distanced and wearing your masks of course, and I ask all of us to use common sense, common courtesy and compassion to help us get through the semester.

Best, Beth

Beth A. Boehm
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