



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY UPDATE

April 2, 2021

Campus update: Planning for summer and fall

Dear Shockers:

It is hard to believe that more than a year has passed since we first began implementing changes on our campus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we perhaps adapted to a new sense of normal, we cannot overlook the enormity of all that we accomplished: a shift to online learning, remote working, and rapid response to ever-changing public health orders dictating mask requirements, social distancing, gathering limitations, and travel quarantines. We understand that navigating through this pandemic has required sacrifices – great and small – from all of us and we remain grateful for your continued cooperation, patience and flexibility.

While the future of this pandemic and its effect on our daily lives still remains somewhat unknown, we are pleased to be coming to you with a message of cautious optimism as we continue our transition a mode of operation similar to before the pandemic.

Changes to public health orders

As you know, last week, Sedgwick County Commissioners voted to rescind all local COVID health orders, effectively immediately, and adopted a resolution that strongly recommends that individuals continue to practice COVID-healthy behaviors for the next 90 days: be vaccinated when eligible, wear a mask and maintain social distance. Since the beginning of this pandemic, we have followed all guidance and orders issued by state and local public health authorities. Accordingly, WSU has rescinded all mandates requiring masks, social distancing and mass gathering limitations on our campus. However, we continue to strongly encourage our entire campus

community to engage in these practices whenever possible. We *also* encourage everyone to get the vaccine when they become eligible. Please [visit our website to learn more about how to get the vaccine](#). Watch for updates soon to WSU's suggested guidance on planning and hosting safe campus events.

We understand that, in certain cases, there may be programmatic requirements for faculty, staff and students to wear masks – for example, in our patient-serving clinics or students on clinical practicums and rotations, or in those instances where close contact cannot be avoided, and additional precautions may be warranted. Please consult with your supervisor and/or instructor for further instructions.

Campus operations

Everyone will soon be able to enjoy a return to the busy and vibrant campus so many of us have missed this past year. That includes in-person classes, services, events, activities and research.

As previously communicated, we will have two course delivery options for the summer and fall: online and hybrid. While those courses designated as “online” operate entirely online, hybrid course options include in-person instruction with the flexibility for online delivery. These delivery designations are available in the course schedule and course design web page, allowing students to make an informed decision regarding enrollment.

Additionally, we have planned a return to pre-pandemic operations for our faculty and staff beginning June 1. For those who worked in person and on campus prior to the pandemic, this will include a return to on-campus work.

Next steps

We understand that these most recent changes are still new to everyone. We also understand that everyone's comfort level with these changes may be different. That's why we're starting the planning and communication process early.

Employees who are unsure if they will be able to return to work on campus should speak with their supervisor and [HR business partner](#) to explore the possibility of an accommodation or remote work.

Students with questions regarding course delivery options are encouraged to work with their academic advisor or success coach for further assistance.

There will be much more information to come as we prepare for this transition. Please [watch our most recent town hall here](#), or email questions to covid@wichita.edu.

Finally, as we have said countless times before, if this pandemic taught us nothing else, it is that even the best-laid plans and intentions cannot guarantee us certainties. So, as we work toward what will now be our post-pandemic normal, we understand that we *must* continue to remain flexible and willing and able to pivot to alternative arrangements as circumstances dictate. We ask for your understanding and patience during these next few months. We will continue to keep you updated on our plans for summer, fall and beyond.

Thank you for all you do and for your commitment to Wichita State University.

With gratitude,

Dr. Rick Muma, interim president

Dr. Shirley Lefever, interim provost

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