



OFFICE OF THE
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

August 17, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the start of the Fall 2021 semester, we understand there remains a good deal of trepidation and anxiety over the Delta variant of COVID-19 and the number of unknowns that it brings. Together, we want to assure you that the university remains engaged and vigilant as ever. The following update is intended to provide you with new information and resources as we prepare for the fall semester.

Student Survey Data

OU Health Services at Goddard Health Center facilitated a survey in June 2021 of current Norman campus students (n=2,867) regarding attitudes and behaviors related to vaccines. Key findings included:

- **73% of students** (Undergraduate and Graduate) had 1 or more vaccine doses at the time of the survey
- Upperclassmen and graduate students were more likely to be vaccinated when compared to first-year students
- 63% of rising sophomores received at least one dose as compared to 84% of graduate student respondents receiving at least one dose

Given these findings from the June survey data, it was important to understand vaccine participation rates among the entering freshman class. As part of the housing move-in process, staff asked incoming first-year residential students (n=3,807) about their vaccine status or their intentions to get vaccinated. With an incoming class of 4,600, this represents an 83% sample size. Key findings included:

- **66.46%** of incoming freshmen reported they were **vaccinated**
- Of those who were not vaccinated, **22.33% (285) expressed interest** in getting vaccinated
- Vaccine participation is far greater for OU students as compared to vaccine participation rates of Oklahomans in the 18-24 age group at 26.5% within the state (OSDH, 2021)

The university continues to promote COVID vaccinations performed by OU Health Services, resulting in 122 students vaccinated at residential vaccine clinics during move-in, representing 42.8% of those who expressed interest in getting vaccinated. Additional [walk-in clinics](#) have been announced.

Student Vaccine Incentives and Appreciation Program

The Division of Student Affairs has launched a [vaccine incentives and appreciation program](#) (#OUVaccinates) offering scholarships and athletics season tickets in conjunction with the [White House COVID College Challenge](#) to promote vaccinations. OU is 1 of only 2 universities in Oklahoma formally participating in the federal program.

The university is also developing an incentive and appreciation program for faculty and staff who choose to get vaccinated.

Campus Signage and The Healthy Together App

The OU Marketing and Communications team has created updates to signage and OU Operations is posting these throughout campus. The signs state the following: wear masks indoors, get vaccinated, and download the [Healthy Together App](#). The Healthy Together App is a convenient tool for COVID-19 screening and reporting for students, faculty, and staff. The App's Passport feature replaces the university's online COVID-19 Screening and Reporting Tool, which was first implemented in March 2020.

Instructional Guidance

Our Instructional Continuity Guidance and FAQs for in-person instruction is continually being updated and can be found here: [FAQ \(ou.edu\)](#).

Faculty who are immunocompromised, have health comorbidities, or have family members at home that are at high-risk may contact HR to evaluate the potential for alternative arrangements that may be available. If available, then we can make an instructional mode of delivery modification.

What You Can Do To Help

If you are interested in helping to promote masking and vaccines at OU, here are some ways you could consider participating.

- **Wear a mask indoors and encourage your students to do the following:**
 - As the university strongly encourages mask wearing indoors; you are advised to strongly encourage this practice in your classroom.
 - Please inform your students even though masking isn't required by law, we will hold it as a community expectation of one another to keep us safe and together. Feel free to let them know you have a strong preference they wear a mask in class, and if they do not, then you may ask that they do not sit in close proximity to the instructor or others expressing health concerns.
 - Post and share photos at OU events showing participants masking indoors. The university encourages masking for all individuals in high-density settings, such as classrooms and at special events. Request a "Vaccinated" t-shirt from Student Affairs and wear it at OU to promote the vaccination efforts.
- **Support university efforts to get OU community members vaccinated.**
- **Message the importance of healthy behaviors.**
 - The Office of the Provost will be making available PowerPoint slides that you are welcome to use for your classes. These slides underscore the importance of masking indoors, getting vaccinated, and practicing other healthy behaviors such as staying home when sick.

International Student Support

Due to ongoing difficulties with travel restrictions and visa appointments, some new and returning international students will have difficulties arriving to campus by August 23. Knowing this, last spring the Office of the Provost approved an extended "arrive by" date of September 13 for international students to arrive to campus and take up in-person coursework. If a student in your class falls into this late-arrival category, please do everything within your power to work with them to

stay as up to date as possible with the material before arrival, and to help acclimate them to your class once they are in Norman. This is crucial for their academic progress as well as their mental and emotional well-being.

We remain hopeful and optimistic that we can carry our current plan throughout the fall semester. We are constantly monitoring the situation and will be nimble in our response. To remain [OU Together](#), we must each do all we can to support one another as we navigate the challenges and obstacles that lie ahead.

Please join us in modeling healthy behaviors for our students. Wear your mask, and if you haven't already, and are able to do so, please get vaccinated. Thank you for doing your part to keep us together.

With thanks for your partnership and efforts,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "André-Denis Wright". The signature is stylized with a large initial "A" and "W".

André-Denis G. Wright
Senior Vice President and Provost (Norman campus)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keri Kornelson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Keri Kornelson
Chair, Faculty Senate (Norman campus)