
From: Bernadine Chuck Fong <fongbernadine@fhda.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 10:55 PM
To: foothill
Subject: Update on the Omicron variant, following the Chancellor's email

Hello, all,

After two days into our Winter Quarter, I want to congratulate and thank every one of you for making the opening of our quarter so successful as our return to campus went very smoothly. This was done despite the threat of the Omicron variant. At this point, our Health Services staff have been working diligently and assiduously in screening our students before coming to campus. However, we want to be sure that each of your departments or divisions have been given **KN95 masks** (two each, for now, more later) and we are asking all faculty, staff and administrators to wear them and wear them correctly. We are also asking all faculty and staff members to remind students in their areas to wear the **surgical/medical masks** and to also wear them correctly, like bending the nose band to fit snugly over the nose, not the lips, and no "holes" on the side.

We also want to avoid as much disruption to our classes as possible. The other issue we are seeing is that students who are testing positive or reported exposure, are being given a red badge and cannot return until they secure a negative Covid test. However, while we have test kits intentionally reserved for use should there be any cases on campus, we do not have enough kits for students who have symptoms before coming to campus. These same students cannot attend class until they receive a negative test, and they are telling us that the earliest they can schedule a test in the community is well into next week! Thus, we are now doing a rush order for an additional number of kits and will reach out to those students to be tested as soon as possible and return to campus, if testing is negative.

Also, I think we, and the rest of the country, the world, need to accept that this virus is probably here indefinitely but in various forms, Delta and Omicron being but two of the potentially many variants. Therefore, we need to have a process that allows us to adapt to the challenges that any variant presents, being proactive rather than reactive. Besides the safety measures noted above, we want to be vigilant in making sure that we have taken all the necessary safety precautions while making our in-person classroom delivery as smooth as possible. We have already assigned classes to rooms larger (when possible) than their class size limit so there is adequate space to spread apart. As with any in person class, there is also the hybrid option, and we trust our faculty members and their respective dean, to decide if a temporary hybrid option is the best and least disruptive approach to students who are on campus. If individual faculty members have any concerns or observations which would be helpful to all of us, please share them with your dean and/or Kurt, Laurie or me, so we can be make any necessary improvements. Lastly, I want to share what a student said today. He has been a Foothill student for two years but today was his first time coming to campus for class. We don't want to disappoint him or others.

Best regards,

Bernadine

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