

The following message is being sent to all Academic Senate Members, Academic Assistant Deans, and Academic Department Managers.

UC SANTA BARBARA

Academic Senate

September 29, 2021

Divisional Chair's Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the first week of this fall quarter. It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm of our students as they engage in-person with their instructors and each other, many for the first time. The information below, assembled with the help of our campus COVID-19 Working Group, is the most recent I have regarding pandemic-related issues on campus.

COVID-19 cases at UC Santa Barbara and in Santa Barbara County. The campus identified 11 cases of COVID-19 among about 9,500 students (for a positivity rate of 0.1%) via its mandatory testing of all students during their move-in to campus housing over the past two weeks. The testing protocols are designed to identify cases, including asymptomatic cases, quickly before they have significant contact with others. The case numbers for student move-in are comparable to or lower than all of our sister UC campuses. As of today, there are 12 students in the university's quarantine and isolation (Q/I) housing, including both students who normally reside in campus housing and those who live in IV. None of these students will be attending classes until their Q/I period is over. The most recent testing, case numbers and Q/I numbers can be found on the university's COVID-19 [dashboard](#).

In Santa Barbara County, daily case rates continue to decline. Today, the county reported 12.5 new cases per 100,000 residents, down from the most recent peak of 30 per 100,000 residents on August 13, according to the county [dashboard](#). Campus positivity rates are much lower than in the county. Our much higher vaccination rate and testing frequency allow us to identify cases early, isolate them as soon as possible, and minimize disruption to the instructional function of the university. However, the campus case rate is generally

closely correlated with the county rate, and after the perturbation created by the repopulation of the campus in the last two weeks, we expect the decline in community transmission will translate to a corresponding decline in campus cases as well.

Reporting and notification procedures. Anyone concerned about COVID-19 exposure on campus is welcome to make use of the [free campus testing facility](#). Testing is most accurate 3-5 days after a possible exposure, and results are available in as little as half a day (more typically, the next day). For targeted exposure notification, instructors are encouraged to turn on [California COVID Notify](#), a free, Bluetooth-enabled app created by the California Department of Public Health and used by many of our students. This app will alert you when you have been in close contact (≥ 15 min.) with someone who reported a positive test. The notification is designed to [protect the privacy](#) of both parties; it does not store any identity or location data. iPhone users will go to SETTINGS, turn on "Exposure Notifications," and select U.S. with California as the region. Android users can download the app through the Google Play store.

Anyone who tests positive off-campus should notify the university's COVID-19 Response Team immediately (weekdays 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at (805) 893-3113, or anytime at ucsb-covid19@ucsb.edu). Those tested on campus do not need to perform any additional notifications. [When a student or instructor tests positive](#), the COVID-19 Response Team will provide that person with information about the required isolation protocol and initiate an investigation to identify and notify close contacts. Although the name of the person who tested positive must remain confidential, the Team will send email notifications to instructors and students in all classes who may have been exposed. As of September 29, four students had participated in instruction while potentially infectious, resulting in email notifications to a total of 7 different classes. These numbers are also comparable to or lower than our sister UC campuses.

Our medical team expects transmission in classroom settings to be very unlikely, considering the high vaccination rate and universal use of face coverings on campus in these situations. To the best of my knowledge, there have been no known cases of classroom transmission to date across all of the UC campuses. Still, it is important for instructors to encourage any student who feels unwell not to attend class, by providing alternative ways to make up coursework. According to current Public Health guidance, fully vaccinated individuals without symptoms do not need to isolate or quarantine after a potential classroom exposure. Since the vast majority of instructors and students are vaccinated, classes can and should continue to be taught in-person after one of these notifications. Unvaccinated instructors or students who may have been exposed should contact the UCSB COVID-19 Call Center at (805) 893-3113 for advice.

Compliance and enforcement issues. A remarkable 97.0% of our students are now fully vaccinated (the corresponding number for faculty and staff is 90.6%, a number that we hope will continue to rise in the coming weeks). Only 19 students (out of ca. 25,000) who registered and paid fees for fall did not comply with the vaccine mandate, either by submitting evidence of vaccination or requesting an exemption or deferral. On September 27, these students were notified that their registration would be canceled. They have been dropped from all of their current classes as of today.

Clearance badges are being checked upon entry to the Dining Commons and the Rec Cen. Instructors are allowed (but are not required) to verify these badges for access to classrooms. Instructors may remind students that they need to complete the daily symptom screen and obtain a green badge before attending class.

Compliance with indoor masking appears to be very high so far, although students may need occasional reminders to wear their masks correctly (covering both the nose and mouth). While masks are not required outdoors, some students would like instructors to ask everyone to wear their masks when they congregate outside classroom doors, immediately before and after class.

The Office of Student Conduct is following up on students who do not comply with the testing mandate (for students with an exemption or deferral from the vaccine mandate, or for vaccinated students selected for random testing). Students who do not comply with other COVID mitigation protocols can be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). Non-compliance by instructors can be reported to the appropriate department office, for initial follow up by the chair. Non-compliance involving staff can be reported to the business officer of the relevant department or unit.

Classroom issues. Some instructors have reported issues with technology and/or temperatures in classrooms. Instructors with technology issues in Campbell Hall, Buchanan Hall, IV Theaters, or Embarcadero Hall should contact the hall manager. Faculty with issues in unstaffed halls/rooms can contact Media Equipment (805-893-3549, or help@id.ucsb.edu) for assistance. Please treat ID's hard-working staff and student staff kindly as they try to correct any problems for you. Some classrooms may also be warmer than in previous quarters because of pandemic-related changes to ventilation, since maximizing the fresh air intake can result in less efficient cooling. Instructors experiencing temperature issues can contact Facilities Management at 805-893-4008. Please also remember that FM is stretched as they work to ensure smooth operations on the entire campus.

Flu vaccine mandate. The UC Office of the President is expected to announce a new

vaccine mandate for the seasonal flu imminently. Details about how the mandate will be implemented are still being worked out. Students can receive their flu vaccine at Student Health; employees will obtain their shot from their local health care provider or pharmacy.

The campus COVID-19 Working Group is continuing to meet and to discuss all of these issues. New information relevant to faculty is being posted regularly at the Academic Senate's "[Guidance for Faculty during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)" site (including the [FAQ page](#)), as well as Instructional Development's [Keep Teaching](#) site (including the [FAQ page](#)). I will let you know if there are any significant changes in the campus situation, or our COVID-19 mitigation policies.

Sincerely,
Susannah Scott
Divisional Chair, Academic Senate



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