



January 5, 2022

Dear Heidelberg Students,

Welcome back! We hope you had a chance to relax and recharge over break, and are ready for a busy and productive Spring Semester. We want to take this opportunity to share with you a couple of updates regarding our COVID-19 protocols and options as we navigate through the latest challenge: the omicron variant of COVID-19.

As you are probably aware, conditions are changing rapidly because of the extremely high transmissibility rate of omicron. Seneca County has not yet experienced the surge in cases and hospitalizations as other parts of the state and country, but it is expected soon, according to our Seneca County Health Commissioner Anne Goon, with whom we have been in close discussion. With the highly contagious nature of the omicron variant, our campus could experience a significant number of positive test results in a short period of time. This potential scenario requires a high level of diligence in individuals monitoring symptoms, being tested as necessary and taking proper precautions.

Here is some helpful information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about the [omicron variant](#) as it continues to monitor its course.

Additionally, the CDC recently issued [new guidance regarding the recommended isolation and quarantine period](#) for those who test positive for COVID-19 or those who have been exposed, shortening that period from 10 to 5 days. The Seneca County General Health District is aligning with this new guidance, and continues to advise all of us to utilize testing, masking and distancing.

Same Protocols in Place

Heidelberg's protocols for masking and distancing remain in place for the spring semester: Everyone is required to wear a mask while indoors. This includes athletic events and dining facilities. Six feet of distancing should be observed whenever possible, with 3 feet of distancing required for classrooms.

***** IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, YOU SHOULD STAY AT HOME AND NOT REPORT TO CAMPUS UNTIL YOU ARE TESTED.**

If you are symptomatic, please attempt to get tested at home with your primary care physician. If you are unable to secure a test, you should notify Stoner Health & Counseling Center right away.

To help you if you feel unwell or are identified as a close contact, Heidelberg has created some guidelines for you to follow:

- [What Do I Do If I Feel Unwell?](#)
- [What Do I Do If I'm Identified as a Close Contact?](#)

Remote Classes

Out of an abundance of caution, *some* faculty may choose to teach remotely for the first two weeks of the semester, from January 10- January 21. On January 19, Heidelberg will review current COVID data to determine if faculty teaching remotely should shift to the originally selected modality (in person, hybrid, or hyflex) or if those faculty can teach remotely for an additional week.

If any of your faculty decide to teach remotely for the first two weeks, those instructors will contact you directly via email and/or through an announcement on Canvas.

COVID-19 Testing

This semester, Heidelberg will test symptomatic individuals as well as those who have had an exposure to COVID-19.

- Testing will be provided, free of charge, at Stoner Health & Counseling Center.
- If you would like to be tested during move-in, you can report to Campus Center 136 for your test during designated move-in hours. If you are moving in during unscheduled hours, you will need to contact Stoner Health & Counseling Center at 419-448-2041 to set up a testing time.
- Testing for student-athletes will continue to follow guidance from the NCAA, the CDC, and state and local health experts.
- Students should continue to notify Stoner Health & Counseling Center if they are symptomatic, have a positive test or have been identified as a close contact, so Health Center personnel can direct their quarantine and/or isolation.

Following a semester in which we successfully managed the many and evolving challenges of our COVID world, we are again faced with a new set of challenges.

We have the tools to keep ourselves safe and healthy. It's incumbent upon each of us to use them. These coming weeks and months will test our patience, but we have proven that we are resilient. Stay tuned for updates and possible changes to our protocols, and we ask you to please be flexible as the current fluid situation may require some quick pivots.

Best wishes to all of you for a healthy, safe and productive Spring Semester.

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