



January 5, 2022

Dear Heidelberg Employees,

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 can notify [Human Resources](#) and they will overnight you a home test kit. If you are already on campus, you can call the health center at x2041 or HR to make arrangements for a test.

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 and Work From Home**

Faculty members can choose to offer one or more of their courses remotely for the first two weeks of the Spring 2022 semester, from January 10-21, 2022. On January 19, Heidelberg will review current COVID data to determine if faculty should shift back to the originally selected modality or if faculty can choose to continue teaching remotely for an additional week.

- Faculty members who wish to teach remotely for this time period should first discuss the matter with their department chairs to determine the feasibility of offering your class(es) remotely for two weeks.
- After discussing the matter with your department chair, faculty members must, in a single email:
  - Notify your department chair, [Dr. Courtney DeMayo Pugno](#) (AVPAA), FPC and Human Resources, of your intent to teach remotely for the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester.
  - Your email must include a list of all courses you will teach remotely.

We are extending this same remote option to all staff members. If you have concerns about the potential spread of COVID-19 in your workplace, and you are able to complete your work assignments remotely for the next two weeks, you may seek approval from your direct supervisor, and then notify Human Resources.

## **COVID-19 Testing**

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

- Employees should continue to notify HR if they are symptomatic, have a positive test or have been identified as a close contact. HR will continue to provide guidance for return to work dates and alternate work arrangements for those affected employees.

- Testing will be provided at Stoner Health & Counseling Center during designated testing hours. Watch for announcements.
- If you would like a test but can't access one, Heidelberg will provide you with a home test kit, which can be picked up in the Human Resources Office or you can request a test kit be shipped to your home address by contacting HR.
- There is no charge for the rapid tests completed at the health center or the home tests provided by Human Resources.
- Testing for student-athletes will continue to follow guidance from the NCAA, the CDC, and state and local health experts.

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.

Janelle Baldosser  
Director of Stoner Health & Counseling Center

Leslie Erwin  
Chief Human Resources Officer

Bryan Smith  
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Rob Huntington  
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