AUCC Spring 2022 Campus Guidance: Updates

The Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) member institutions – Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Spelman College, and the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library – announce that COVID-19 vaccination booster shots will be required of all eligible staff, faculty, and students for Spring Semester 2022. The deadline for compliance with this requirement is February 6, 2022. The AUCC continues at the vanguard of protecting the health and wellness of our campus community. This leadership has led to great successes with some of the lowest COVID-19 positivity rates and highest vaccination rates of any college campus in the nation.

Communities across the nation have seen significant increases in COVID-19 cases because of the spread of the Omicron variant. The AUCC continually monitors the latest data and consults with the Morehouse School of Medicine and public health experts and epidemiologists to understand the trajectory of the virus. Careful consultation and review of these data demand that steps must be taken to prepare for a potential surge of cases in January. Recognizing the elevated level of concern about the Omicron variant and its potential impact on spring semester operations, protocols to mitigate community spread are necessary. We continue to operate with the safety and well-being of our AUCC community at the forefront of our decision making. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlines guidance encouraging citizens to understand the importance of getting vaccinated (and getting a booster shot) to protect oneself and others as we combat the threat of COVID-19 spreading and producing new and potentially more contagious variants. Additionally, most of the serious illnesses and deaths from COVID-19 are among the unvaccinated.

As the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) member institutions prepare to welcome groups of students and employees back to our campuses for the Spring 2022 academic term, enhanced health and safety protocols are being implemented to help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These protocols are informed by guidance from the Georgia Department of Public Health, Fulton County Board of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the scientists and physicians of our own Morehouse School of Medicine. While these protocols are detailed, the effectiveness of these plans are dependent upon adherence by all members of the AUCC community who accept responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others. Because the public health environment may change, these guidelines may be amended should conditions and public health responses dictate.

**AUCC health and safety protocols include:**

- faculty, staff, and student expectations
- Vaccination and booster shot requirements and exemptions
- COVID-19 testing (pre-arrival testing, day of arrival testing, and frequent surveillance testing)
- isolation and quarantine processes
- visitors and vendors

**Student:**

- **Mask Wearing:** Students and employees, regardless of vaccination status, must wear face masks in all indoor (apart from their personal residential dorm room, singular office) and outdoor spaces, and when attending large or crowded gatherings (e.g.: stadium events). The mask must cover the mouth and nose. Face shields do NOT replace mask wearing. Students and employees who choose to wear a face shield, must also wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose.

- **Physical Distancing:** Crowded settings still present a greater risk of transmission among people who have not been fully vaccinated, especially when individuals from unknown vaccination status are brought together (mixed population). Additionally, increases in infections from the omicron variant are most likely due to a combination of two factors: increased transmissibility and the ability of the variant to evade immunity conferred by past infection or vaccination (i.e., immune evasion). Students and employees, regardless of vaccination status, are expected to observe physical distancing of at least six feet. In classroom settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, masking is required for all students and employees, regardless of vaccination status.
**Covid-19 Testing:** To reduce the possibility of students or employees arriving on campus for the spring semester while they are COVID-19 positive, AUCC member institutions require all students and employees, regardless of vaccination status 1) **request an at-home saliva-based PCR test** kit at getcovidsafe.com and complete and receive a negative result before returning to campus and 2) **take a Rapid Ag test upon their arrival** for move in (residential students), the first day of classes (commuter students), or first day of work (employees). The AUCC epidemiologist will closely monitor the incidences of COVID-19 on each campus, which includes ongoing regular testing for all campus stakeholders, with varying frequency for vaccinated and unvaccinated employees, student athletes, and others who work on campus or otherwise have a regular presence on campus.

**Vaccination and Boosters:** The member institutions of the AUCC announce that COVID-19 vaccination booster shots will be required of all eligible staff, faculty, and students for Spring Semester 2022. **The deadline for compliance with this requirement is February 6, 2022.** Although COVID-19 vaccination remains effective in preventing severe disease, recent data suggest vaccination becomes less effective over time, especially in people aged 65 years and older and at preventing infection or milder illness with symptoms. The recent emergence of the Omicron variant (B.1.1.529) further emphasizes the importance of vaccination, **boosters,** and prevention efforts needed to protect against COVID-19. Data from clinical trials showed that a **booster shot** increased the immune response in trial participants who finished a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna primary series 6 months earlier or who received a J&J/Janssen single-dose vaccine 2 months earlier. With an increased immune response, people should have improved protection against getting infected with COVID-19, including the Delta variant. For Pfizer-BioNTech and J&J/Janssen, clinical trials also showed that a booster shot helped prevent COVID-19 with symptoms.

1. Students and employees are eligible for a booster:
   - Pfizer: 18 and older at least 5 months after vaccination series
   - Moderna: 18 and older at least 6 months after vaccination series
   - Jassen/Johnson and Johnson: 18 and older at least 2 months after vaccination dose

2. Students and employees are considered fully vaccinated:
   - 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
   - 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine
   - If you do not meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated.

   Previous infection with COVID-19 DOES NOT indicate a vaccinated status; Individuals are required to be fully vaccinated to access the campus.

3. Student and employees testing frequency
   - Fully vaccinated: Rapid Ag test weekly or random PCR. PCR test will be required after spring break; institutions will facilitate all testing
   - Non-fully vaccinated: Rapid Ag test twice weekly or random PCR. PCR test will be required after spring break; institutions will facilitate all testing
   - All student programs that require removal of masks must test with Rapid Ag test twice weekly; institutions will facilitate all testing

**Isolation and Quarantine:** Students and employees are required to comply with institutional policies when quarantine, isolation, and/or preventative health-related measures become necessary.

1. Isolation pertains to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have experienced symptoms consistent with COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status.
   - During isolation, students will relocate to a temporary housing assignment for a **minimum of 10 days.** Upon leaving isolation students must receive approval from the institution before returning to class
   - During isolation employees are required to stay away from campus for a **minimum of 10 days.** Upon returning to campus employees must receive approval from the institution before returning to campus
- **Essential personnel** (public safety, clinicians, facilities and other groups identified by the campuses) who are **asymptomatic** may test out of isolation early. These groups must isolate for 5 days, take a PCR test on day 6, and provide a negative PCR result before returning to campus. If results are positive, they must adhere to the complete isolation period.

- Students and employees who continue to have symptoms of COVID-19 after completing at least 10 days of isolation must be evaluated by a medical professional. Upon returning to campus, students and employees must 1) provide a note from a medical professional stating the student or employee can return to campus and 2) receive approval from the institution before returning to campus.

- **Quarantine applies to vaccinated and unvaccinated students and employees** who have come into close physical contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 and have not submitted proof of COVID-19 vaccination. The length of quarantine will be determined by the exposure date. The day of exposure is considered day zero.
  - During quarantine, unvaccinated students will relocate to a temporary housing assignment for a minimum of 7 days, asymptomatic students must receive a negative PCR test result collected on day five after exposure to exit quarantine on day seven. Students should test with a rapid test twice a week while in quarantine and upon returning to campus must provide proof of a negative PCR test.
  - Unvaccinated employees are required to stay away from campus for a minimum of 7 days, asymptomatic employees must receive a negative PCR test result collected on day five after exposure to exit quarantine on day seven. Upon returning to campus employees must provide proof of a negative PCR test.
  - Vaccinated students who have come into close physical contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must quarantine in their room or off campus for a period of 5 days. During this time, student should not attend in-person classes or any campus events. Students must schedule a PCR test 5 days after exposure and wear a mask until they have received a negative result.
  - Vaccinated employees who have come into close physical contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must quarantine off campus and take a PCR test 5 days after exposure and wear a mask until they have received a negative result.

- **Medical**: AUCC Student Health and Wellness physicians, in concert with institutional student health service professionals, will assess and manage student medical treatment. AUCC campus nurses will provide ongoing care to assist with diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.
  - To schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, call 404-752-1000 (employees) or (404) 756-1241 (students).
  - Vaccination Locations: Morehouse Healthcare - 455 Lee Street SW, 2nd Floor Atlanta, GA 30310 (employees) or AUCC Student Health and Wellness Center 455 Lee Street SW, 3rd Floor Atlanta, GA 30310 (students).

- **Visitors and Vendors**: Visitors are those who are not active members of an AUCC institution’s faculty, staff, or student population, as defined by the institution’s human resources department. Vendors provide products and/or services to the institution and are not formally considered visitors.
  - Visitors and vendors are required to always wear a face mask and physical distance while on campuses.
  - Visitors and vendors are prohibited from being on campus if they have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past two weeks, are exhibiting signs or symptoms
of illness of COVID-19, or were in close contact to someone confirmed to have COVID-19.

- Depending on their relationship to the institution including the extent of time they spend on campus and the type and duration of engagement with institution employees and students, some visitors and vendors may be required to participate in the testing protocols herein described (vendors: if no mandated regular testing regime is mandated by their employer).

- **International Students Vaccines:** CDC guidance for those fully vaccinated applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. This guidance can also be applied to COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization.
  
  - Vaccines approved by WHO are: AstraZeneca, Covishield (Serum Institute of India) Sinopharm (Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products) Comirnaty/BNT162b2 (Fosun Pharmaceuticals, Hong Kong) and Sinovac-CoronaVac.
  
  - Students who have not received an FDA- or WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccine by the time fall classes begin will need to be revaccinated with one of the vaccines approved for use in the U.S. once they arrive on campus.
  
  - Students traveling internationally into the U.S will be required to provide a negative PCR test within 3 days before their arrival for move in (residential students) and the first day of classes (commuter students).