

## COVID-19 Update: Guidance on Masks and Campus Gatherings

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Tue 1/18/2022 3:56 PM

To: Rojas, Jason <Jason.Rojas@trincoll.edu>

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

With a little less than two weeks until the start of the spring semester, we are writing today to share updates on our strategies and procedures for mitigating COVID-19 within our campus community during the ongoing Omicron surge.

### Mask Guidance

As students, faculty, and staff return to campus, we must take particular cautions given the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant. While cloth masks had proven effective against earlier variants of the virus, [research is showing](#) that a higher level of mask protection is necessary to curb the spread of the Omicron variant. For that reason, **we are now mandating that all members of the campus community wear a surgical-type, minimum ASTM level 1, or a KN95 mask**. Cloth masks are not allowed unless they are used over ASTM-approved masks as part of double masking.

Beginning the week of January 18, the college will provide all members of the campus community with access to ASTM-approved (level 3) masks. KN95 masks will be available to employees in certain high-density work conditions. This supply will be available until March 31, and we will monitor and evaluate conditions and public health guidance to determine adjustments after March 31.

While the college will provide ASTM-approved and KN95 masks, we encourage all members of our community to provide their own supply of ASTM-approved or KN95 masks if possible. Students should plan to bring their own supply when returning to campus, and employees may provide their own supply for use while at work.

### ASTM-Approved Masks

These level 3 masks will be available in classrooms/laboratories, the Raether Library and Information Technology Center, Mather Hall including the dining hall and Welcome Desk, Ferris Athletic Center including the testing center, the Koepfel Community Sports Center, Austin Arts Center, Admissions, Chapel, Cornelia Center, and Koepfel Student Center/Bistro.

Additionally, we will send masks to Campus Safety, academic departments, S.A.I.L., Bantam Network, Multicultural Affairs, and the Career and Life Design Center.

We ask that you be considerate of each other and take no more than two masks at a time and limit to when needed. This will help sustain our supply of masks and reduce waste.

### KN95 Masks

KN95 masks will be prioritized for employees who are at greater risk of transmission due to certain high-density working conditions or campus locations: classrooms, residence halls, dining halls, athletic facilities, library, and campus safety. Employees will receive a follow-up message from their division head regarding distribution of masks.

Any other employee who would like to request a KN95 can do so through their manager or division head. Eligible employees will receive five KN95 masks per month on the first of the month. Request for masks can be submitted to [PlansToReturn@trincoll.edu](mailto:PlansToReturn@trincoll.edu).

We do not recommend N95 masks for general use on campus. These highly efficient respirators require a tight fit and must conform to [OSHA guidelines for use](#) (includes evaluations, training, and fit-testing). In addition, the CDC recommends that these masks be reserved for healthcare workers.

Wearing masks indoors is essential to protecting every member of our community. All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, **must wear masks indoors at all times**, unless you are alone in a private office or residence hall, or eating/drinking in dining or coffee café facilities.

### **Gathering Guidance**

As we [communicated earlier this month](#), we have updated our [meeting and gathering policies](#) for the start of the spring semester. This includes continuing to prohibit social gatherings and in-person meetings are discouraged but allowed if masks are worn for the duration of the meeting. Please continue to avoid having meetings or gatherings that include food and beverage. We expect these policies to be in place for at least the first month of the semester, and we will continue to monitor conditions to determine adjustments as needed.

Thank you for your attention to these updates and for your continued support and cooperation to protect the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Jason Rojas, Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President for External Relations  
Joe DiChristina, Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management