

## March 1 Campus Update Regarding Mask Requirements

I hope you are having an enjoyable spring break! Whether you're on campus, vacationing with family/friends, taking part in service projects, or competing athletically – I hope you're able to take some time to rest, relax, and recharge!

Beginning at noon today, the University is relaxing the [face covering requirement](#) on campus. I recognize for some of you, this policy change will come as a relief, and for some it will cause concern. I want to take a moment to explain why this policy change is being made now, and what steps the University will continue to take to help promote the health and safety of the campus community. As you review this information, I ask that you keep in mind that *each of us* play an integral part in keeping campus healthy and safe for everyone.

On Friday, February 25, the CDC downgraded Hancock County to a “moderate” transmission risk, as well as introduced the new [COVID-19 Community Level](#) designation and associated guidance. Hancock County's COVID-19 Community Level is considered “low,” and the county continues to see a downward trend in active cases. Here on campus, for the week of 2/20-2/26, 4 new positive cases were reported (same as previous week) and there were 2 continuing, active cases. In accordance with the updated guidance from the CDC and Hancock Public Health, the following policy changes take effect today:

- Face coverings will no longer be required in campus buildings or at campus events.
  - Individuals may choose to continue to wear face coverings if they are more comfortable doing so.
  - Individuals that are symptomatic, test positive, or are exposed to someone with COVID-19 should wear a face covering. If individuals feel unwell, they should stay home.
  - Face coverings will remain required in Cosiano Health Center until further notice.

The University will continue to promote the following preventative measures and observe CDC/Hancock Public Health guidance:

- Encourage/provide access to vaccinations.
- Encourage good hygiene.
- Maintain access to testing:
  - Encourage symptomatic individuals to test at home or through Cosiano Health Center. Positive test results must be reported to Cosiano Health Center.
- Continue to follow [CDC isolation/quarantine guidance](#).
- Maintain other mitigation efforts:
  - COVID stations in classrooms.
  - Sanitizer/masks available in each building.
  - Ventilation and cleaning efforts.

The University continues to monitor developments in the COVID-19 pandemic and remains in close contact with Hancock Public Health. For the most up-to-date information, you are encouraged to review the [Oiler Start Safe & Stay Safe Plan](#). Any adjustments to University COVID-19 policy and protocol will be made in accordance with guidance from the CDC and Hancock Public Health, and will be communicated to the campus community in a timely manner.

The past 22 months have been challenging for everyone, but we are at a point in the pandemic where policies can be relaxed. I wish each of you well, and thank you for doing your part to keep Oiler Nation healthy.

Sincerely,

**Skylar Mettert, MAE**

Associate Vice President for Safety & Wellness