

Feb. 3, 2021

Good afternoon,

Just a week and a half into the semester and we've had a snow day. Winter's definitely here, so be sure you are signed up for [Burg Alerts](#) and watch your FSU emails, as always, for important information. Here are this week's updates.

COVID Testing Expansion: We have expanded our COVID-19 testing protocol so that ALL students and employees regularly on campus will now test **twice EVERY week**. We are able to do this after seeing how efficiently our testing center ran during the first week, as well as being able to acquire more tests with the help of the University System of Maryland and other USM schools. We intend to use the results of these tests to more closely keep tabs on the status of the virus among our on-campus community, one of the [indicators](#) we are using to monitor and respond to the pandemic.

Those of you who are eligible should plan to **test twice a week, every week**, once on Monday or Tuesday and again on Thursday or Friday. (We've eliminated the limitations based on the first initial of your last name.) Show up any time between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Lane University Center Manicur Hall (ARMAH). Enter through the south-side doors on the first floor of the Lane Center — near the bookstore — and follow the signs to the check-in stations.

Vaccines: Unfortunately, I do not have much more to report on when vaccines will become available for our community than I did last week. Here are some [frequently asked questions](#) on the Maryland COVIDlink site to keep you updated on the state's status and the priority list for who will receive vaccines.

When the time comes, we intend to be ready to implement something quickly, using our COVID testing centers as a model. That planning is under way.

Federal COVID Funding for Students: As I mentioned last week, we are once again providing \$375 to students (those eligible for federal aid) to put toward housing on campus or rentals in Frostburg. **If you got these funds last semester, you will get them again automatically; no application necessary.** They will be sent electronically to your bank account or by check in the mail, if you did not provide bank information previously. The automatic direct deposits should appear by the end of next week. (Mailing checks will take longer.)

If you did not receive a housing award last fall but believe you qualify this spring, apply at [this link](#). (You must qualify for federal financial aid to be eligible.) For this group, it will take a couple of weeks to process all the applications and send the electronic deposits or mail out checks.

We are working through the details of eligibility for the second round of federal stimulus funds. We will announce that information soon.

Class Status on Snow Days: Obviously we can expect the occasional snow day. Our current hybrid model of classes allows us to limit the disruption to instruction that comes with inclement weather days. For any future inclement weather cancellations, the following policy will apply:

If the campus is closed:

- In-person class meetings are canceled.
- Fully online classes will continue regardless of campus status.
- For hybrid (blended) courses, students should consult with their instructor and their class syllabus regarding plans when campus is closed. Blended classes may be taught online at the instructor's discretion.

This change comes from the Provost's office after review by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. I encourage faculty members to address their individual class policies with their students as soon as possible. The weather closings policy can be found at [this link](#).

Construction Cam: While there is not much to see quite yet in the construction of the new Education and Health Sciences Center, that will change soon. And you can watch the progress on the construction cam at [this link](#). Play the time-lapse option to see the day, week, month or the full project.

The building is scheduled to be complete by fall 2022.

Safe Behaviors Can Stem the Spread: As we are still waiting for COVID vaccines for most of our population, and as new variants of the virus begin to circulate, it is even more important that we make use of the behaviors that have been proven to protect us:

- Wear masks (covering the nose, too).
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Wash hands.
- Avoid crowds. Social and family gatherings, even small ones, have been identified time and again as a major source for spreading the disease.
- Monitor your symptoms using the [FSU Check-in Portal](#). This is required on work days and any days that you come to campus.

Many of these practices are covered in the [Social Compact](#). If you haven't read and acknowledged it yet, do it now at [this link](#).

Stay safe. Stay warm.

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