New safety measures for spring semester

'SoHE Dean's Office' via sohe_staff <sohe_staff@g-groups.wisc.edu>
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To: sohegradstudents@googlegroups.com <sohegradstudents@googlegroups.com>; sohe_faculty@g-groups.wisc.edu <sohe_faculty@g-groups.wisc.edu>; sohe_staff@g-groups.wisc.edu <sohe_staff@g-groups.wisc.edu>

Dear SoHE faculty, staff, and graduate students,

You will have just received the following message from Chancellor Blank about safety and health protocols that we can anticipate for the spring 2021 semester. Please read her message closely and plan accordingly for your respective roles in our community (note that the app discussed will not be available until January). More information will come over the winter break, and undergraduate students will also receive this information.

Meanwhile, know how proud I continue to be of all you’ve done this unprecedented year and how committed I remain to supporting you in your work. Good luck with final papers, projects, grant applications, grading, and all the other important things you do for our human ecologist community.

Sincerely,

Soyeon Shim, PhD
Dean, School of Human Ecology, UW–Madison

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This message from Chancellor Rebecca Blank covers:
• New requirements for campus testing starting in January
• A new app, Safer Badgers
• A new badge system to control access to campus facilities and services

Translations will be posted
Dear faculty and staff,

As the fall semester nears its end, I want to thank all of you for the flexibility, understanding and resilience you’ve shown as we’ve negotiated the upheaval and uncertainty caused by COVID-19. The many challenges we’ve overcome together have made us a stronger, more caring community.

Looking ahead, the vaccine news is very encouraging. Yet we know the pandemic is far from over — the last few weeks alone show its devastating toll in hospitalizations and deaths across the country. With that in mind, we have been working on additional testing protocols to enhance the safety of the campus community during the spring semester.

The new measures, which increase the scope and frequency of testing and are linked to access to campus, represent a significant change from the fall semester. Proof of recent negative test results will be needed in order to access campus facilities and services.

**Required testing, more often**

Research has shown that people may become infected and spread COVID-19 to others without knowing it. As previously announced, we are partnering with Shield T3, a subsidiary of the University of Illinois System, to provide accurate and rapid saliva-based PCR testing beginning in January.

Faculty and staff working on or using campus facilities during the spring semester will be required to test regularly. How often you test will be determined by your role on campus. At a minimum, you will need to have tested negative within the previous eight days (192 hours) prior to coming to campus.

We recognize this requires some additional effort and are working to make compliance as easy as possible. We anticipate having testing available 7 days a week, including early morning and late night hours, at sites throughout campus. An appointment system will minimize the time required to test.

**Beginning Jan. 25, any time you come to campus, you will need to have tested negative within the previous 8 days (192 hours).** Before you come to campus for the first time this spring, it’s important to plan ahead to be sure you have a negative test within this time period.

After that, if you come in at least once a week, include a stop at a testing center as part of your day. If you do not come to campus at least once a week, plan a testing visit to ensure that when you do come, you have tested negative within the previous 8 days. You will need to remain up to date with testing in order to access campus facilities and services in the spring.

This requirement will also apply to graduate and professional students, including students in clinical rotations. All undergraduate students living in the greater Madison area will be
required to test twice weekly, regardless of whether they are coming to campus for instruction
or to use campus facilities.

We will continue policies that encourage flexible work arrangements and remote participation
options for campus meetings wherever possible.

**Safer Badgers app**

Everyone will use a mobile app called Safer Badgers to find testing locations, schedule tests,
quickly obtain test results, and access additional health resources.

The app will be available for download by mid-January. A campus loan program will provide
limited-use smartphones to those who need them.

One screen of the Safer Badgers app, called the Badger Badge, will serve as a virtual access
pass for entry into campus workplaces and buildings where in-person classes and other in-
person activities are being held.

The screen will not show any private health information – it will simply show whether you are
up to date on your testing. You’ll need to show your Badger Badge upon request to trained
employees who will monitor access to buildings and campus services. The Safer Badgers
website will also allow individuals without smartphones to print a copy of their building
access status.

The app is designed to help you keep track of required testing. It also provides anonymous,
secure notifications to anyone who has been in proximity to another participating app user
who has tested positive for COVID-19. Proximity is initially set as 2 hours within about 6 to 10
feet.

By expanding testing and linking campus access to this testing, we will put additional strong
curbs on the spread of the disease. However, expanded testing, while powerful, can get us
only so far. We need everyone in our campus community to continue following other health
protocols: Wear a face covering, maintain physical distance, avoid gatherings with people
you don’t live with, and wash your hands often. Your actions will have the greatest impact on
the health and safety of our campus.

**Watch for more information**

As we go into winter break, multiple teams across campus are working to prepare these
enhanced measures for the spring semester. In the weeks ahead, we will be sharing many
more details with you via email and a new section of the COVID-19 Response website.

In fact, we likely will need to communicate with you a little more than usual over the winter
break because of these new measures. Thank you in advance for your attention to these
messages and for your continued patience and understanding.

Rebecca Blank
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin–Madison

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