

COVID-19 Update

From the Office of the President July 12, 2021

Dear Members of the Aquinas Community,

As we prepare for the beginning of the next academic year, I would like to share with you the protocols related to the COVID pandemic that will be in place at Aquinas Institute of Theology, as of August 16, 2021. These protocols are the result of serious reflection on the part of the Administration and have been made in consultation with medical experts, public health officials, and other academic institutions. Additionally, our vaccine policy must be consistent with, and in keeping with the vaccine policy at Saint Louis University with whom we have a longstanding contractual relationship and frequently share on- and off-campus space and resources and cross-registration.

All on-campus students, faculty, and staff members are required to be fully vaccinated before August 16th. For those who have not yet been vaccinated, this will take five to six weeks, if one receives the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, so the window for vaccination is closing rapidly. Therefore, students, faculty, and staff members who have not been vaccinated should proceed to do so immediately. An on-campus student includes any student who attends a class on site at Aquinas Institute, including a cohort student who attends a course intensive on Aquinas Institute's campus.

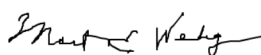
We wish to assure you that we remain committed to following the principles that underlie the mission and identity of Aquinas Institute. These include a search for truth that is carried out in a community dedicated to the service of the Church and the broader world through our preaching and teaching. As Dominicans and Catholics, we recognize the primacy of the common good over our individual desires or preferences. In a particular way, we strive to be good stewards of the gift of life and health that we have received gratuitously from our God. As part of this stewardship we realize that we must be responsible in keeping ourselves and others safe.

An exemption from this mandate may be granted on the grounds of medical circumstances or religious belief. Those requesting a medical exemption must include a letter from their primary licensed health care provider indicating their need for a medical exemption. With regard to religious belief, Pope Francis said in January, "I believe that morally everyone should take the vaccine." Similarly, Bishop Kevin Rhoades, chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine, in March said that "being vaccinated can be an act of charity that serves the common good." Those who receive an exemption will be required to sign-in and to wear a mask while they are inside the Aquinas Institute building. They may also be asked to undergo COVID-19 testing. Those seeking an exemption for reasons of a medical condition or religious belief must do so no later than Monday, August 2nd, by writing to Brother John Steilberg, O.P., at steilberg@ai.edu, who is coordinating our response. Visitors to Aquinas Institute who have not been vaccinated will be asked to sign in and wear a mask while they are inside the building.

We believe that our response to the COVID pandemic reflects the deepest values of Aquinas Institute, and we ask for the full support of our community in implementing these protocols. At the same time, we are aware that these protocols have a provisional character, should the situation change and new recommendations come from government agencies or the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

We again wish to thank you, the members of the Aquinas Institute community, for your generous and caring response to the COVID pandemic over the last sixteen months. It has reflected your deep commitment to our Dominican values of shared study and concern for one another.

Yours in Christ and St. Dominic,



Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP

Please direct questions or requests for information to the
Office of the President at President@ai.edu

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 8:38-39