

## COVID-19 Update

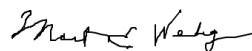
### From the Office of the President January 14, 2022

Dear Aquinas Institute of Theology Community,

Welcome to Aquinas Institute of Theology for the Spring 2022 semester. We will begin the semester on **Tuesday, January 18**, again with face-to-face classes. With all staff, faculty, and students who are on campus required to be fully vaccinated and many who have received a booster dose, we must do our part to ensure good health and safety to maintain a safe campus. We continue to observe the protocols and recommendations of government officials and medical experts for a safe school environment. Please refer to the information presented below which expresses Aquinas Institute's support for our community members to have a booster vaccination.

Best wishes for a reflective, safe, and enriching semester. The Aquinas community is in my prayers.

Yours in Christ and St. Dominic,



Fr. Mark E. Wedig, OP, PhD

### Important Information for the Spring 2022 Semester

Aquinas Institute of Theology is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to follow the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as well as state and local health officials. We plan to remain open and have in-person classes during the spring semester. Aquinas Institute strongly encourages all eligible students, faculty, and staff to obtain a booster vaccine dose for the spring semester. To see if you are eligible for a booster shot, please refer to the CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

Early studies indicate that vaccination protection against the Delta and Omicron variants decreases over time, just as immunity wanes after a COVID-19 infection. Preliminary data on the Omicron variant indicates that a booster dose of vaccine is more effective at preventing infection than simply being vaccinated with the one- or two-dose regimen. Therefore, we highly encourage you to get the booster dose as soon as you can. This will help protect you from infection and prevent the need for you to quarantine after exposure.

Anyone who received an approved vaccine exemption for the fall semester will not be required to apply for a new exemption for the spring semester. If you would like to apply for a booster dose exemption, you may email Brother John Steilberg OP at [steilberg@ai.edu](mailto:steilberg@ai.edu) to request an exemption.

Throughout the two-plus years of this pandemic, scientists have worked to quickly understand how this disease is transmitted, which safeguards protect against the spread, and to develop new vaccines and medications to prevent and overcome this disease. Science continues to evolve just as the virus has mutated and evolved. Aquinas Institute has adjusted our protocols when science indicates that it is needed. We safely stayed open and in-person when many schools were forced online.

Current science tells us what is working to prevent infection and stop the spread of this disease: receiving a booster dose of vaccine, wearing a tight-fitting and multi-layer face mask, and limiting our social interactions that take place in indoor crowded spaces that have poor ventilation. The CDC advises wearing face masks or respirators for all individuals who are able to appropriately do so. Face masks continue to be an essential safeguard against disease transmission, especially when paired with vaccines. Please be vigilant about wearing your face mask when on campus.

We continue to follow the isolation and quarantine guidelines released by the St. Louis City Health Department for all faculty, students, and staff. New quarantine guidelines require you to quarantine if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and you are eligible for a booster dose but have not received it. This is another reason to receive your booster dose right away. Having received your booster dose means that you won't need to quarantine. Additional information is found at: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/communicable-disease/covid-19/guidance/upload/COVID-19-Isolation-Policy-1-11-2022.pdf>

Please direct questions or requests for information to the Office of the President at [President@ai.edu](mailto:President@ai.edu).