
Subject: Summary of COVID Test Results and Update on Academic and Extracurricular Programs

Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 4:35:11 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: LC Communications

To: All Students, All Faculty, All Staff

January 6, 2021

Dear Students, Parents, Faculty, and Staff,

Welcome back to winter term and thank you all for your patience over these past few days as we awaited test results and repopulated the campus following the holiday break. No one wanted to restart school this way, although we remain hopeful that the current COVID surge will be short-lived. It is certainly good to have our students back on the Island.

As you know, we required everyone returning to campus to provide a negative PCR or lab antigen test, and on Monday afternoon, as part of that requirement, we sent out 571 tests for analysis by Mirimus lab. We started to receive the results from that testing yesterday afternoon through the evening but did not get the last results until this morning. Forty-five people tested positive from that Mirimus group, and another 72 individuals let us know that they had tested positive through other means at some point over break. We also had a small number of faculty and students who faced travel difficulties returning to campus and still others who remain out for other reasons.

We have completed another round of testing today but, given the enormous number of samples currently being processed by Mirimus, we do not expect to receive those results until the weekend. I suspect that we will see still more positives and will follow our standard protocols with them. We will notify all the community members who test positive and, once that is completed, will send an “all clear” to the community. Research continues to suggest that the Omicron variant is milder and that while the overall positivity rate for Connecticut is very high, the number of hospitalizations is not tracking at the same rate. Nonetheless, this level of illness within our community will cause a fair amount of disruption—just as would a flu outbreak of this magnitude. Hence, we anticipate our academic and extracurricular programs to continue to be disrupted for the next few weeks.

On the academic front, we know that both students and faculty will likely cycle in and out of COVID protocols over the next few days and possibly weeks, interrupting our normal flow of classes. We will attempt to maintain our regular schedule as well as we possibly can, but in acknowledgment of this pending disruption, we have decided to eliminate the traditional midterm progress reports for the winter term. Instead, teachers will provide brief feedback for students and advisors later this month. More details on that as well as an FAQ about what to do when a student or faculty member needs to miss classes will come in a follow-up communication from the Academic Office and Dean of Faculty in the next few days.

This week, students will be responsible for one assignment per class to hand in next week. We will decide about in-person classes on Sunday depending on the results from today’s testing. We will begin holding all afternoon activities including athletics practices starting tomorrow (Friday) although outdoors or in larger indoor spaces whenever possible and with masking and social distancing requirements. Some activities may choose to use Zoom to gather. Students should watch for an email from their coaches and club advisors with more details. We will continue to require masking in the dormitories and will continue to provide grab-and-go meals.

While this situation is far from ideal, as a community we will pull together and will work to make the winter term as successful as possible.

Flexibility, kindness, and patience! I’m hoping for snow tomorrow.

Ne cede malis.

Sheila