



TO: Researchers and Specialists

FROM: Sanjeev Kulkarni, Dean of the Faculty
Pablo Debenedetti, Dean for Research

SUBJECT: Spring 2021 COVID-19 updates

DATE: February 1, 2021

Today begins the spring semester, our third semester marked by the unique challenges of the pandemic. Despite the profound disruptions to our work as researchers and scholars, our University community has demonstrated tremendous resilience as we work together to protect health and safety, and we thank you for your continued vigilance.

As we enter the spring semester, we are writing to highlight information regarding the University's response to the pandemic.

This memo includes information on:

- Working on and off campus
- Testing
- Vaccination
- Scientific modeling and COVID statistics
- Students returning to campus

Working on and off campus

- As the coronavirus continues to spread and mutate and as the number of people on campus grows, we must redouble our commitment to the required social distancing, mask wearing, and frequent testing (for those on campus regularly), among other health and safety protocols.
- As a reminder, academic professionals who find it necessary to come to campus must complete mandatory online [COVID-19 Awareness Training](#) as well as the state-mandated [Daily Symptom Check](#).
- When possible, academic professionals are strongly encouraged to continue to conduct research from home if they can do so effectively. However, researchers whose living conditions are a major impediment to their work may request approval from their supervisor to work on campus. Complete information on conducting research during the pandemic is available on the [COVID-19 Research Operations](#) page.

Testing

- Testing of academic professionals who are approved to come to campus will continue as before. You will receive email notifications regarding any changes to testing locations and protocols.
- Staff who work regularly on campus are tested once per week; those at higher risk (e.g., healthcare workers, emergency responders, staff who cannot always maintain physical distance) are tested twice per week. Faculty who will offer in-person course elements or be on campus regularly are tested once per week.
- Undergraduate students living on campus or living off-campus locally and graduate students living in campus housing or who are on campus regularly are required to be tested twice per week.
- Both the campus testing lab and the contract lab (Accurate Diagnostics) confirmed that they are able to detect the recently noted variants of the virus. The University is also developing the capacity to identify unusual variants or evidence of outbreaks or clusters.

Vaccination

- For now, the University does not have a vaccine supply, and it is unclear when it will. **We therefore strongly encourage you to obtain a vaccination elsewhere without delay if you are eligible to do so and, where possible, to pre-register with your state**

or local government. Please note that any adult who lives, works, or is being educated in New Jersey can pre-register for the vaccine through the state's [vaccine scheduling system](#). Questions specific to vaccines may be directed to covidvaccines@princeton.edu, though we caution that there is limited additional information available at this time.

Scientific Modeling, COVID Statistics

- The University has consulted with faculty in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology to estimate numbers of positive cases among faculty, staff, and students over the course of the semester. The modeling predictions included the possibility of new variants in our area.
- The introduction of new variants into our models increased our pessimistic estimates from a high of 700 cases to 1000 cases, and isolation beds from 100 to 120, all within our planning boundaries.
- The COVID website includes a regularly updated dashboard with the [latest data](#) on symptomatic and asymptomatic testing, quarantine, and isolation statistics for the Princeton University community.

Students returning to campus

- All undergraduate students living on campus as well as those living near campus must abide by the [Social Contract for Spring 2021](#) and participate in the University's [COVID-19 testing protocols](#).
- Approximately 2,887 students have signed contracts to live on campus in our residence halls; another approximately 668 students are living locally (which we define as Mercer County/Plainsboro).
- Arriving undergraduates will have participated in a seven-day arrival quarantine before the start of the spring semester February 1.
- A pilot *Community Advocates* program, involving staff walking various parts of campus and engaging with students, will help to promote community wellbeing.
- Graduate student numbers are expected to be similar to fall, when 1,650 graduate students lived or worked on campus (out of 3,065 enrolled graduate students).
- Most teaching and learning will remain virtual this semester, despite the presence of

many more students on campus. About 15 undergraduate courses will be taught in a hybrid fashion or will have significant in-person course components.

For more information on any of the above topics, and for additional COVID-19 campus information, see the University's [Spring Term 2021](#) and [Princeton COVID Resources](#) websites.

We hope you and yours continue to be safe and well. Our best to you all.