

Dear Quincy University community:

We've said it before, but it bears repeating: Happy New Year! Though COVID-19 remains a very serious challenge, 2021 is the year when we can beat the pandemic. We are counting on all the members of the QU community to do their part to defeat COVID-19 in the months to come.

This message is the **eighty-second update** on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most Quincy University students are not living on campus at present. Some student athletes and students with special circumstances are on campus this week, and more will be coming to campus in the coming days as athletic teams begin practices. Our residence halls will reopen on January 22, with the first spring semester classes beginning on January 25.

Here's our review of the COVID-19 situation for the Quincy University community:

1. There are no known COVID-19 infections on campus for QU students. There are no students in quarantine on the QU campus. Quarantine facilities are available on campus, in the event they are needed.
2. Surveillance testing for COVID-19 is being conducted for student athletes presently living on campus and who are in their sports season.
3. We are aware of no current COVID-19 infections among QU faculty, staff, or vendor employees.
4. The best way to reduce our risk for COVID-19 infection is the consistent use of **masking, distancing, and good hand hygiene**. All members of the QU community should continue to follow these public health safety guidelines as we begin the new year.
5. For any student currently living on the QU campus and for all employees, it is essential that students, faculty, and staff **report symptoms** of anything that might be COVID-19 as soon as possible. While some of us might be tempted to avoid reporting a symptom on the grounds that the symptom seems minor, a healthcare professional, not an individual student or employee, should make this determination. **There is *no* acceptable reason for failing to inform us about a medical symptom that might point to COVID-19.**
6. **If you intend for any reason to have a COVID-19 test** or you have taken a COVID-19 test not arranged by the university, no matter where you are living right now, **please contact Dr. Tracy** with the details of your situation. For example, President McGee has had two COVID-19 tests since the end of

the fall semester – both tests were negative -- and Dr. Tracy knows all about them. Dr. Tracy should know all about your COVID-19 tests as well.

7. New guidance regarding COVID-19 testing, safety, and quarantine protocols continues to be announced by federal, state, and county sources. **QU will update its COVID-19 policies and procedures for Spring 2021** in response to the latest guidance provided to colleges and universities. Updates to our policies and procedures will be announced by email as those updates are available, including any information we might receive about COVID-19 vaccines.

If you are a member of the QU community and have not read the previous update messages, you could search them out in your email folders or read them at <https://www.quincy.edu/coronavirus/>. The next COVID-19 email update from the university is anticipated no later than January 18, 2021.

Local and State Reports on COVID-19 Cases

As background for our safety measures at QU, we continue to report local and statewide COVID-19 information to all members of our community. Because the pandemic was declared nearly nine months ago, it is no longer useful to report total case numbers. We will continue to provide active case counts and current hospitalizations. In the **Quincy region (i.e., Adams County)**, there are 589 active cases at present. There are 55 current hospitalizations in Adams County linked to COVID-19. One Missouri resident has died in Adams County of causes related to COVID-19, as have 74 Adams County residents. Information about COVID-19 cases in Illinois, including county-by-county reports, is available at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>. QU updates on COVID-19 cases are taken from the public reports of state and county agencies.

Missouri reports its COVID-19 cases for the past seven days and does not provide daily updates to its COVID-19 summary. Information about COVID-19 in Missouri is available at <https://showmestrong.mo.gov/data/public-health/>.

Announcements for 2021

All undergraduate students should look for **specific email announcements from Dr. Tracy about check-in** for the 2021 Spring Semester, which will include many details not provided in the COVID-19 email updates.

Any student who has had a **COVID-19 test in December 2020 or January 2021** and has not yet informed Dr. Tracy about the test should do so immediately. Student athletes who took their COVID-19 tests on campus under the supervision of our athletic trainers or physicians do not need to contact Dr. Tracy.

As previously announced, all new and returning students will have to provide a **negative COVID-19 test** when they come to campus. Students who are not NCAA athletes ordinarily should secure a negative test prior to coming to campus. However, if a student is unable to secure a test for some reason, that student should contact Dr. Tracy to make special arrangements to be tested immediately upon arrival on campus. This requirement for a negative COVID-19 test does not apply to undergraduate or graduate students who are only taking online courses and will never come to QU's campus during the 2021 Spring terms. Dr. Tracy will provide additional testing information in separate email messages.

Information about COVID-19 tests for student athletes has been sent to those students separately.

Upon returning to campus, students should expect the same COVID-19 university policies and procedures regarding masking, physical distancing, and campus dining to be in effect for Spring 2021 that were in place at the end of Fall 2020. There will be some changes to our COVID-19 testing policies, which will generally improve the frequency, timeliness, and convenience of testing on campus. Details regarding our updated testing policies and procedures will be announced later this month. As we have noted in the past, our QU policies may be revised from time to time as we receive new advice from federal, state, and local experts on public health.

In the coming weeks and months, more and more members of the QU community will have the opportunity for COVID-19 vaccination. Unless a physician advises otherwise, we strongly encourage vaccination for every eligible member of our community. **With the support of their physicians, President McGee and Dr. Tracy are both committed to vaccination for themselves and for members of their families.** We will provide more information about Quincy-area opportunities for vaccination as soon as that information is available, and we hope that many, many members of the QU community will be able to take advantage of these opportunities.

A member of President McGee's family believes some **incredibly stupid lies** published on the Internet about COVID-19 vaccines and is resisting his physician's advice to get vaccinated. Please do not believe stupid lies about the COVID-19 vaccines. For accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines, Dr. Kimberly Hale, Professor of Biological Sciences at Quincy University, recommends

information provided by the Mayo Clinic at <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/covid-19-vaccine-myths-debunked/>. **Trust Dr. Hale's recommendation.** Do not trust information provided by people who do not know what they are talking about.

Further, and at the risk of oversimplification, it is the position of the Roman Catholic Church that the currently available COVID-19 vaccines in the United States are morally acceptable. If you have questions about the Catholic position regarding the current COVID-19 vaccines, President McGee and other members of our community with expertise on this question, including Fr. John Doctor, would be happy to discuss the matter with you.

Thanks to the cold weather, squirrel sightings on the QU campus are now quite rare. If you want more information about the cold-weather habits of squirrels, you might enjoy this webpage: <https://1source.basspro.com/news-tips/small-game/7241/hunting-squirrels-during-winter#:~:text=As%20the%20worst%20days%20of,re%20harder%20to%20hunt%2C%20too>. It just so happens this page includes information on winter squirrel hunting, which you should never, ever, ever do on the Quincy University campus. Yep, the hunting information is entirely coincidental.

Finally, Hawks, please remember to protect yourselves from COVID-19 during this new year. The vaccine will not be widely available for some time, and this disease remains frequently dangerous and sometimes deadly. Let's keep our families, friends, faculty, staff, and students safe. Keep those masks handy. Keep using that hand sanitizer.

We'll see you soon. May God bless all QU Hawks, everywhere.

Sincerely,
Dr. Brian McGee, President
Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development