

Dear Quincy University community:

This message is the ninety-third update on Quincy University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

1. On Wednesday, August 25, we tested 79 unvaccinated students for COVID-19, even though those students reported no COVID-19 symptoms. This sort of large-scale testing or screening for COVID-19 infections is called **surveillance testing**. **Of those 79 unvaccinated students, all tested negative for the COVID-19 virus.** We will continue to conduct surveillance testing throughout the fall semester, with an initial focus on unvaccinated student-athletes. Additional surveillance testing, possibly to include all unvaccinated and vaccinated students, will be conducted if necessary, though testing of unvaccinated students is far more likely than testing of vaccinated students. QU uses rapid COVID-19 antigen testing for this purpose, which is quick and painless.
2. In addition to our surveillance testing, QU is testing on average three or more students, faculty, and staff each day for COVID-19 because those community members report one or more COVID-19 symptoms, such as a headache or congestion. Today, ten people were tested, and **one student had a positive COVID-19 test.** That student is in **quarantine**, and contact tracing was completed. The other nine people had negative tests.
3. As noted in the last COVID-19 email update, four students had positive COVID-19 tests when they were tested off-campus prior to QU check-in. Those students are in quarantine off campus and will not be able to come to campus until their quarantine is completed.
4. We are continuing to get new information about student, faculty, and staff vaccinations. We will update our vaccination totals for the QU community in our next COVID-19 email update.
5. Student, faculty, staff, and vendor employees continue to **get vaccinated** each week. Vaccination is free, vaccination is quick, and vaccination is very safe and highly effective. Please get vaccinated unless your physician tells you not to do so.
6. We know that some QU students may be required to participate in **COVID-19 surveillance testing provided through their local employers in Quincy or nearby communities.** We ask all students to report their test results to Dr. Tracy.
7. For the current semester, we are aware of **no COVID-19 cases for QU faculty. One full-time staff member and one part-time staff member recently tested positive for COVID-19** and are now in quarantine. No one in quarantine is permitted to return to campus until that person's quarantine period is complete.
8. Faculty, staff, and vendor employees should continue to **seek out COVID-19 testing** when they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms. Those faculty, staff, and vendor employees seeking to arrange a rapid COVID-19 test on campus should contact Dr. Tracy directly.
9. By far, the best way to reduce our risk for COVID-19 infection and serious illness is vaccination. **Masking, distancing, and good hand hygiene** also can be important ways to reduce risk. All members of the QU community should continue to follow public health safety guidelines.
10. 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.**

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11. **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.
12. New guidance regarding COVID-19 testing, safety, and quarantine protocols continues to be announced by federal, state, and county sources. Updates to our policies and procedures will be announced by email as those updates are available.

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/>.

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 well over a year 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)**, 83 new cases have been reported today. There are 46 current hospitalizations in Adams County linked to COVID-19. Since the beginning of the pandemic, one Missouri resident has died in Adams County of causes related to COVID-19, as have 137 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

On August 23, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that the COVID-19 vaccine developed and manufactured by **Pfizer** has been **fully approved**. The safety of this vaccine was evaluated for over six months, and **hundreds of millions of doses** of the Pfizer vaccine already have been administered. The result of this research is clear: The Pfizer vaccine is very safe and highly effective. **Unless your physician tells otherwise, there is absolutely no medical reason to avoid taking this vaccine.** So, take the vaccine, please, if you haven't already done so.

As many of you know, **Adams County, Illinois** – and every other county in the State of Illinois -- currently is considered at **high risk** for COVID-19 transmission. If you are away from campus and are unvaccinated, you should wear your mask while indoors. For the moment (see below), if you are away from campus and are vaccinated, we strongly recommend that you wear a mask while indoors.

As if our lives weren't difficult enough, a disease called respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is now circulating among adults in our region. For adults, RSV mimics the symptoms of both the common cold and COVID-19. The current prevalence of RSV means that more of you likely will be seeking out COVID-19 tests in the coming weeks. Strep throat also is showing up regularly in our region right now.

Finally, **it is now expected that Illinois's Governor Pritzker will announce new indoor masking mandates as early as tomorrow.** Any new masking mandate will apply to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in Illinois. We will provide additional guidance to the QU community as soon as we have more information.

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We thank the students who ran with President McGee tonight in the outdoor Miles with McGee annual event. The heat and humidity didn't slow down our students, but it did make the ice cream afterwards taste even better.

Stay safe, Hawks! And, as always, don't forget your masks.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian McGee, President

Dr. Christine Tracy, Vice President for Student Development

P.S. As we have said before, we will attempt to call attention to **false rumors** as we learn about them. One current rumor suggests that people who have been vaccinated will not be able to attend class, participate in band or choir rehearsals, or participate in athletic activities or practices for 30 days after COVID-19 vaccination. **This 30-day rumor is not true.** Vaccination does not prevent anyone from attending classes or participating in other campus activities.

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