



March 24, 2022

Dear Members of the University Community,

The University is implementing the following important changes to the Royals Back Together Plan based on our campus experience in responding to the pandemic, continued monitoring of case activity in our region, and updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

New Masking Approach Begins Saturday, March 26

- **Beginning on March 26, indoor masking in all campus buildings will be optional for all members of the University community regardless of vaccination status, with the following notable exceptions:**
 - Instructors can continue to require that well-fitted, higher-grade masks or double masks be worn in instructional spaces (e.g. classrooms, laboratories). No explanation is required.
 - Employees and students can require individuals to wear well-fitted, higher-grade masks or double masks in their personal workspaces or residence hall rooms, respectively. No explanation is required.
 - Anyone identified as being a close contact with a known positive case must continue to follow all [protocols in the Royals Back Together plan](#), including the requirement for [up-to-date vaccinated individuals](#) (fully vaccinated with booster shot if eligible) to **wear a mask and maintain social distance** until getting a negative PCR test.
- Members of the community should **carry a mask** with them. The University will continue to make masks available at [current locations](#).
- Students may ask their instructors to consider retaining a mask requirement in instructional spaces. If a student prefers to make such a request confidentially, they may do so through a [confidential online process](#), which is managed by the Pandemic Safety Officer and Office of Equity and Diversity.
- **Guests are encouraged to wear a mask indoors throughout campus if they choose to do so.** The [campus is only open to members of the University community and invited guests](#).
- **There are many reasons why an individual may continue wearing a mask. We must all respect and support individuals who continue wearing masks on campus.**

Other Important Updates

- **Meetings and Events:** Meetings and events can include dining options. Masks are optional for individuals attending meetings and events **unless required by the individual or department organizing the meeting or event.**

- **University-Sponsored International Travel:** Travel to countries [designated by the CDC](#) as **Level 4 exclusively because of COVID-19 will be considered for fully vaccinated and boosted individuals** following a review by the University Travel Committee for appropriate safeguards and approval by the applicable University Vice President. [Directions for travel](#) to countries designated as Levels 1-3 remains unchanged.

Updates to the Royals Back Together Plan are informed by [newly released guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The new guidance helps communities adopt prevention behaviors best suited to current pandemic conditions. Lackawanna County is currently designated as “Low.” The CDC does not recommend mandatory indoor masking for communities that are designated as “low” or “medium.”

We will continue to monitor developments and will adjust our response accordingly.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Davis Jr., Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Life

Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D.
Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Patricia L. Tetreault
Vice President for Human Resources