

Dear GVSU Community,

Since the start of the pandemic, we have been vigilant in taking the necessary steps to protect our campus community. As I'm sure you are aware, the national picture today for the spread of COVID-19 is dynamic and worrisome. The Centers for Disease Control increasingly reports upward trends in positivity from the variants. It has become clear that in order to successfully manage the shifting conditions of COVID, we need to implement additional safety measures for the Fall semester, while continuing to follow local and federal public health guidance. We ask for your attention, understanding, and action.

Lakers required to Vax-Up!

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is expected to give full approval to the vaccine in early September. In anticipation of FDA action, GVSU will require all faculty, staff and students to be vaccinated by September 30. We urge you to get your vaccination now. There will be limited exceptions for medical or religious reasons.

We will have numerous free [GVSU vaccine clinics](#) available on campus, including during move-in week August 24-26 and during the first week of classes for arriving students and any accompanying family members to assure information, access and cost are not barriers to this important protection. Vaccines are available now from health care providers, pharmacies, and local health departments. [Coronavirus - COVID-19 Vaccine \(michigan.gov\)](#)

This decision was made after extensive discussion with health and medical experts. Top health organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Johns Hopkins Medicine, report Covid vaccines have been thoroughly tested and found to be safe and effective in preventing severe COVID-19. We are aligning the requirement at GVSU with FDA approval to acknowledge those who are waiting for additional confirmation of the vaccines' efficacy and safety. We recognize education is the best way to increase participation. We want to be a resource for information and access to our students and families, particularly those who need additional support.

As a community, we must lead with our values and care for one another by increasing our vaccination rates. Today, nearly 80 percent of faculty and staff have reported being vaccinated, and of the students who completed a self-assessment in 2021, nearly 60 percent report being vaccinated.

Daily Data Collection/Online Self-Assessment

The [online self-assessment](#) continues to be required. It has proven to be highly successful in mitigating the virus on campus and helps guide any necessary revisions to policies and practices. We require students, faculty and staff to complete the self-assessment each day before coming to campus. Visitors must also fill it out before coming to campus. **Faculty, staff and students are required to record their vaccination status** on their [online self-assessment](#). Please do so at your earliest opportunity.

Testing Program

Students, faculty and staff who are unvaccinated are required to be tested weekly. Our robust testing of the GVSU community has been highly successful in controlling the spread of COVID-19 on campus. We will use information from the self-assessment to send notices for weekly testing.

Face Coverings

Beginning August 9, face coverings will be required in all indoor spaces for all faculty, staff, students and visitors on our campuses. The new [university alert level system](#) will incorporate face covering

requirements based on the overall rate of spread and mitigation measures. We will start the Fall Semester at Alert Level 2 as a precautionary measure. This alert level can change as we learn more about our overall vaccination rate.

Town Hall

A Fall 2021 Virtual Town Hall will be held August 19 at 2 p.m. to answer your questions. You can register and submit questions at this link: gvsu.edu/rsvp/townhall. We have also set up the Lakers Together Call Center at (616) 331-INFO (4636).

We are excited to be returning to our full campus experience and will continue to keep community safety, coupled with preservation of the full student experience, our first priority. We are confident this set of changes, taken together – vaccinations, face covering, testing and regular self-assessments – will keep us safe, learning and help to preserve the fullness of our campus experience. We will be prepared to pivot as CDC, federal and state guidelines change. Watching the alert levels and action matrix will be important for each of us. Up-to-date information can be found on our [Lakers Together](#) website.

Let's remember the pandemic has been stressful for all, and Lakers Together means showing compassion and care as we navigate uncharted waters. My thanks to members of the GVSU Virus Action Team (VAT), who have not missed a day acting in service to each of us, and also to members of the community who continue to care for one another.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you and engaging in campus activities and events during the coming academic year. GVSU is a vibrant learning institution and supportive community because of you.

Sincerely,
Philomena V. Mantella, President