
Subject: COVID-19 UPDATE: Preparing for Spring – Important New Information

Date: Friday, January 8, 2021 at 4:30:59 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: President Lugo

Dear Queens Community,

We have begun implementation of our [Royal Return plan](#) to come back to campus at reduced density with hybrid learning for the spring semester. With the assistance and advice of our partners at Novant Health, we have put additional measures in place for your safety and in the interest of transparency as we navigate and respond to this quickly and constantly changing environment. Here's where we are now:

Current Situation

- At this point, we have all started and some have nearly completed the required 14-day shelter-in-place prior to returning to campus. Please remember, you should be completing our [daily symptom check](#) during your shelter-in-place. This is an important habit to develop now, as it will continue every day before you come to campus or leave your dorm room.
- Thanks to the 1,558 of you who have already signed the [community covenant](#), including almost 100% of our employees. If you haven't done so yet, please check it off your list today. It is a requirement before returning to campus.
- Also underway, some early arrival athletes and employees have begun our entry testing protocol. As of Thursday, 368 people have been tested with four positive results, a 1% positivity rate. Currently five students are in isolation and 26 in quarantine. Any employees who have tested positive are adhering to the contact tracing process, but none have had an interaction on campus.

Dashboard and Alert System

We have published our dashboard that will track and share the results of our testing activity as well as the number of our students in quarantine or isolation. It can be viewed on the main page of our [Royal Return web section](#).

On the dashboard you will find a four-tiered, color-coded alert system, giving you an easy reference to the status of classes, activities, and other campus essentials. We are opening campus at level 2, yellow. This means the following:

- Basic preventive measures are in place, like our mask mandate and physical distancing.
- Classes are hybrid or online as scheduled.
- In-person campus activities are suspended.
- Athletics is training and competing with established protocols in place.
- Meals are provided in a to-go fashion in Trexler with no in-person dining.
- Guests are not permitted inside the residence halls.
- Weekly survey testing is in progress.

Vaccine Distribution

We are also monitoring the development of state, county, and health provider plans for the distribution of vaccines in our area. Mecklenburg County's rollout plan prioritized frontline healthcare providers, including our own health and wellness staff, in phase 1A. Currently, we are in the first part of phase 1B which provides vaccinations to residents who are 75 years of age or older. The university has created a list of all employees working on campus for the spring semester and is working with county and state officials to have these individuals eligible to receive the vaccine as soon as possible. Currently, students are included in phase 3. We will continue to monitor the rollout of the vaccine distribution and will provide more information as soon as it is available.

Training Requirements

To ensure we all have a shared understanding of COVID-19, its risks, and scientifically-proven prevention measures, we have developed a short, [25-minute training](#) that all students and employees are required to complete. It is being delivered through Canvas, our learning management system. Please set aside the time to complete your training within the next week, **no later than January 19**.

I want to assure you that the senior leadership and COVID Response teams are prioritizing your health and taking this return plan very seriously. We are aware of the growing number of cases and community spread in our nation and in [Mecklenburg County](#), which experts say is a result of travel and gatherings during the holidays. Our partners at Novant Health, who we convene with multiple times a week, believe the peak has not yet been reached. For these reasons, your compliance with all the safety measures we have put in place are critical to creating the safest possible environment for our faculty, staff, and students.

We will closely and diligently monitor the results of our testing, as well as quarantine and isolation space, to determine when safety measures need to increase or decrease. We will continue to update you on the results of our weekly survey testing until we deem it no longer necessary. I have confidence that our respectful, conscientious, caring community will work together and prevail through this pandemic. I look forward to seeing you on campus (wearing a mask, six-feet away) sometime soon.

Sincerely,

President Lugo