



# Spring, 2022 Faculty/Staff Town Hall Meeting

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Dr. Tashni-Ann Dubroy, EVP & COO  
Ms. Monique McClung, President, HUSO  
Dr. Hugh Mighty, Dean, COM, VP Clinical Affairs  
Dr. Bernard Richardson, Dean, Rankin Chapel  
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1/11/22



# Guiding Tenets in Preparation for Spring 2022



- Howard University will make decisions guided primarily by considerations for the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and the surrounding community.
- Decisions about health and safety made by the University in the context of COVID-19 will be evidence based, and data-driven where data is available.
- Howard University will continue to deliver an exceptional education and optimal services, within the unavoidable constraints of the COVID-19 response.
- Howard University will be transparent when communicating to our entire University body and our community.



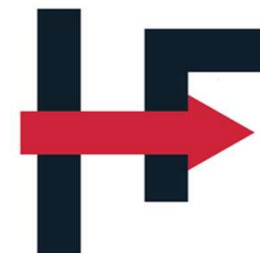
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# Spring 2022 Mitigation Strategies

- In Fall, 2021, the University required COVID-19 vaccination for all faculty, students and staff who would be on campus.
- For Spring, 2022, the University added the requirement for COVID-19 vaccine boosters for all faculty, students and staff by January 31, 2022 (Or within 30 days of becoming eligible for the booster). We will continue to honor medical and religious exemptions.
- All faculty, students and staff who would be on campus must receive a negative COVID-19 test within 4 days of reporting to campus. (We will discuss exceptional circumstances).
- Mask usage will continue to be required indoors, and in groups settings outdoors.
- We will continue to require use of the BisonSafe daily screening app.
- We delayed the start of the semester by one week for undergraduate and graduate students to January 18, 2022.
- Spring break is currently still scheduled March 5-13, 2022. Commencement is currently still scheduled May 7, 2022. (Final Exam Week may be adjusted) – Subject to conditions.
- Face to face courses will begin on that date. Some online courses will be offered secondary to faculty accommodations or building limitations. We can not guarantee that every course a student may want will be offered online.



# COVID-19 Testing Updates – Fall, 2021



Cumulative 8-17-20 to 1-07-22

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL	POSITIVITY RATE
FACULTY/STAFF	598	30240	30838	1.93%
STUDENT	799	64114	64913	1.23%
UNKNOWN STATUS	0	340	340	0.00%
Overall Total	1397	94694	96091	1.45%

01-01-22 to 01-07-22

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL	POSITIVITY RATE
FACULTY/STAFF	300	1044	1344	22.3%
STUDENT	205	1087	1292	15.9%
Overall Total	505	2131	2636	19.2%

<https://howard.edu/pandemic-response/testing-dashboard>

# What has changed with the omicron variant?

- **What is a variant?**
- When a virus is circulating widely and causing numerous infections, the likelihood of the virus mutating (changing) increases. The more opportunities a virus has to spread, the more opportunities it has to undergo changes.
- New variants like omicron are a reminder that the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. It is therefore essential that people get the vaccine when available to them and continue to follow existing advice on preventing the spread of the virus, including physical distancing, wearing masks, regular handwashing, etc.
- **What is known about the omicron variant?**
- Omicron is more easily transmissible, and spreads twice to three times as fast as the Delta variant.
- Data indicates, however, that the omicron variant causes less severe illness than previous variants, especially if someone is vaccinated (and boosted).
- **There will be breakthrough infections of COVID-19 with omicron, even with vaccines.**
- **The point of the vaccines is to prevent severe illness, hospitalization or death from COVID-19.**
- **Vaccines do not 100% prevent transmission of COVID-19**



# What does the most recent data look like?

COVID Positivity by City/State As of January 10, 2022	
City/State	Positivity
Chicago	21%
Miami	33%
New York City	31%
Atlanta	37%
Houston	37%
Denver	26%
Los Angeles	23%
Mississippi	35%
Washington DC	27%
Maryland	28%
Virginia	36%
Howard University*	19%

\*\*Running seven day averages in most cases

<https://covid-harriscounty.hub.arcgis.com/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/miami-dade-florida-covid-cases.html>

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/us/mississippi>



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# What has changed with the omicron variant?

## Hospitalization



- In the District of Columbia, even though cases have increased, hospitalizations have remained low.
- Omicron causes less severe illness than previous variants.

# Why did we delay the start of the semester?

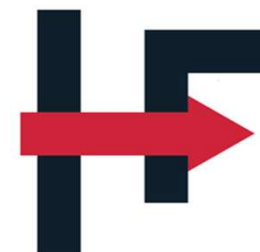


- During the Christmas and New Year's holiday celebrations, we were aware that many students, faculty and staff would be gathering with family and friends to celebrate, many of whom would be unvaccinated. This would provide the circumstances for transmission of virus at homes and gatherings.
- Once someone is infected with the omicron virus, studies show that the greatest risk of transmission is 2-5 days following infection.
- Delaying the start of the semester until January 18<sup>th</sup> greatly reduces the likelihood that someone who was infected during the holiday season would still be able to transmit the virus once they returned to campus.
- Data from the CDC also suggest that the latest surge in cases would start to decline from mid to late January.
- While the vaccines greatly reduce the risk of severe illness and hospitalization, we would not have been able to quarantine/isolate 20% of students if they were to test positive for COVID. Therefore, delaying the start of the semester allowed additional opportunity for individuals to receive boosters and obtain COVID-19 test results prior to return to campus.
- Requiring a negative test is also helpful in mitigation.





# What are other Universities doing?



Selected Institutions	Delay	Online to Start	Face to Face	Boosters
Howard University	Yes	No	1/18/2022	By January 31
American University	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	By February 10
Catholic University	No	Until January 18th	1/18/2022	Recommended
George Washington University	No	Until January 17th	1/18/2022	By January 10
Georgetown University	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	By January 21
Hampton University	No	Until January 23rd	1/24/2022	By January 14
Morehouse/Spelman	No	Until January 28th	1/31/2022	By February 6
University of Maryland	No	No	1/24/2022	By January 24

Institutional Comparisons – Peer Institutions						
Selected Institutions	Delay	Online to Start	Face to Face	Booster		
Georgetown University	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	By January 21		
George Washington University	No	Until January 17th	1/18/2022	By January 10		
Case Western Reserve Univ.	No	Until January 23rd	1/24/2022	By January 3		
Emory University	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	By January 19		
St. Louis University	No	N/A	1/18/2022	By January 31		
Tufts University	No	N/A	1/19/2022	By February 15		
Tulane University	Yes	No	1/25/2022	By January 25		
University of Miami	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	Recommended		
Vanderbilt University	Yes	No	1/17/2022	Recommended		
Washington University in St. Louis	No	Until January 30th	1/31/2022	Recommended		

# What will happen if a student tests positive on campus?



- We will continue to require weekly testing of all individuals, regardless of vaccine status.
- We have developed a policy consistent with the CDC guidelines and Department of Health.
- The student will be contacted by the Public Health team.
- The Department of Health will be contacted to proceed with contact tracing.
- Weekly testing will continue.
- We have several hundred quarantine/isolation rooms.
- If there are a large number of cases, exceeding the number of isolation rooms, we will consider a variety of options; transition to virtual classes, quarantine modifications, the worst case scenario would include potential for closure of residential housing, and fully virtual operations.

# Can the University guarantee that I will not get COVID?



- No, we can not.
- Neither can any University or employer in this country.
- The University will continue to implement the public health measures that we have outlined, and will make additional adjustments as guided by the CDC, Department of Health, and our public health experts to provide as safe an environment as possible.
- However, it is critical that everyone work collaboratively, and follow the public health guidelines, to make Howard University as safe an environment as we can.
- Student, Faculty and Staff individual behavior will determine how successfully we are able to complete the semester in a face-to-face residential environment.
- As we have seen, the variants have introduced new complexity in what we need to do to continue learning and teaching successfully.



January 6, 2022

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## Biden, in Shift, Prepares Americans to See Covid-19 as Part of Life

Before Omicron surge, president said in July the nation was 'closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly virus'



WASHINGTON—As [Covid-19 cases](#) climb across the U.S., President Biden and his administration are preparing Americans to accept the virus as a part of daily life, in a break



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# I am worried about getting COVID, what can I do?



- We are committed to continuing as safe an environment as possible for face to face instruction. If a student has a compromised immune system, or is not vaccinated, it may be prudent to remain home, and enroll in available courses online.
- Depending upon the major, or required courses, we **can not** guarantee that every course that a student may want will be provided online.
- For some programs or courses, the University will not be able to provide a full online schedule to students.
- COVID-19 is becoming endemic, meaning that it is becoming so rooted in the country (and the world), that we will not see a COVID-free environment anytime soon, particularly if vaccination rates do not increase to a higher level.



## A Few Key Questions for Faculty

**What should faculty members do to support students who need to miss class due to illness or quarantine requirements?**

Faculty members have supported students by providing Zoom access to in-person classes; offering recordings of class sessions; or sharing PowerPoints, notes, and other in-class materials electronically. Faculty should also allow for extensions on assignments as needed and ensure that students' participation grades are not negatively impacted. As a reminder, faculty should not ask students for medical documentation and should consider medical absences as excused. Concerns regarding abuse of this process should be communicated to the Dean. Students should be expected to make up all missed work.

**Can a faculty member move an in-person class online due to a conference, sick family member, childcare issue?**

It is not acceptable to change the established modality of the course for longer than one week of instruction without approval from the Chair/Dean. However, the ability to move **a class meeting or two** online due to an unavoidable conflict, childcare issue, etc. should be at the discretion of the faculty member. Faculty should have an established contingency plan regarding how a change to the course modality (for one or two class meetings) will be communicated to students and with as much lead time as possible.



# Introducing our Panelists



Ms. Mariah Cooley, President, COAS Student Council

Dr. Tashni-Ann Dubroy, EVP & COO

Ms. Monique McClung, President, HUSO

Dr. Hugh Mighty, Dean, COM, VP Clinical Affairs

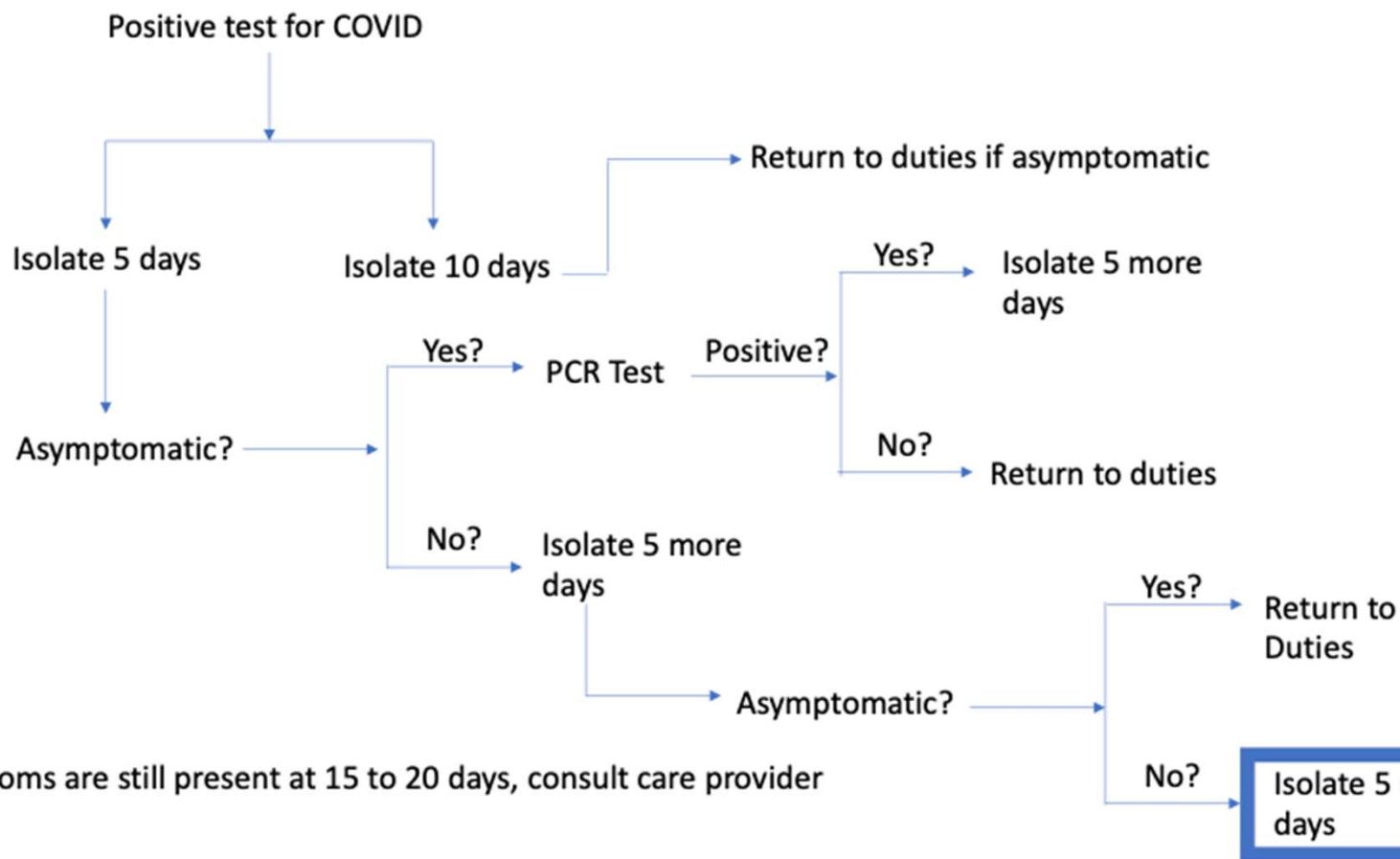
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✳ If symptoms are still present at 15 to 20 days, consult care provider

