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## Community Update and Masking Policy Extension

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Dean Of Students, Coe College <dos@coe.edu>

Wed, Sep 29, 2021 at 7:07 PM

Reply-To: dos@coe.edu

To: All Students <allstudents@coe.edu>

Dear Kohawks,

See below for some important COVID-19 updates and information.

### Mask Policy Extension

The COVID Leadership Committee, in partnership with shared governance and the senior leadership team, have made a decision to continue the current masking policy through Friday, **October 29th**. When the current masking policy was extended earlier in the month, it was due to high positive cases in Linn County, as well as hospital capacity concerns. Since those concerns are still very high, we have determined it is best to continue our current approach.

This continuation of our policy means that all individuals regardless of vaccination status will be required to mask:

- indoors in academic spaces, which includes hallways and traveling between classrooms/restrooms
- indoors in group settings of 30 or more
- during transportation to college events and activities
- in areas where faculty or staff members have identified a need for indoor masking

As a reminder, below are the benchmarks the committee is reviewing:

- The **Coe community positive rate** continues to be under 1%.
- The Coe community has surpassed 80% **vaccination rate** in the student population and 90% for faculty and staff.
- The CDC continues to list **Linn County** as a high risk for transmission.
- **Hospital capacity** is listed as red (little or no ICU/Medical capacity).

As always, if circumstances in Linn County or hospital capacity change dramatically, the committee will consider whether an earlier review of the policy is appropriate. During this time, the leadership committee will further define the benchmarks and next steps, and we will individually examine each component of the masking policy.

### Campus Survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey regarding masking protocols. While individual preferences don't determine policy change, understanding perspectives helps us create a frame of reference.

Overall themes:

- The most common response was a preference for ongoing evaluation of the masking policy.
- The most common response across all three community groups (faculty, staff and students) is that the current college policy regarding masking is appropriate given the current public health conditions.
- There was strong support for the benchmarks currently being utilized.

The survey also allowed us to understand some of the questions around the masking policy and the College's decision-making. We will continue to share as much information and communication as possible in an effort to provide clarification.

### **Campus Community and COVID-19**

Today there are 6 students who tested positive in isolation, and 9 additional students in quarantine. There are zero reported positive tests among faculty and staff.

Numbers of students who have tested positive are updated twice per week on the [Coe website](#).

### **COVID-19 Testing Availability**

Health Services sent a message today regarding the increase of availability of testing on campus. Please complete this [request form](#), which connects you with the COVID response team, to request a test.

### **Flu Vaccine Clinic(s)**

Thursday, September 30 1pm - 4pm

Wednesday, October 6 9:30 am - 11:30 am

Friday, October 8 2:30pm - 4:30pm

Get signed up [here](#) and find the *Healthy You* mobile bus in the loading zone outside the ARC. For full details on the flu clinics and what you should bring, click [here](#).

While numbers in our external community remain high today, there are some early indicators that we could be past the crest in Linn County, which we are all hoping will be the case. Please continue to exercise safety and take care of yourself and others.

Thank you.

~ ~ ~

Keniese Evans  
Dean of Student Experience

Emily Barnard  
Assistant Dean of Health & Wellness

Paula O'Loughlin  
Provost/Interim Dean of Students  
Title IX Coordinator

Student Life  
pronouns: she/her/hers  
[poloughlin@coe.edu](mailto:poloughlin@coe.edu)



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