

**Carleton University - Joint Health and Safety Committee and Union Leadership
COVID-19 Update Meeting #39 – December 15, 2021
Microsoft Teams, 10:00 am**

The Executive Director ORM, Tony Lackey, chaired the meeting.
Given the special nature of the meeting, quorum was not required.

Tony's Remarks:

1. The conservative approach that the university has been taking will help us going into the winter break especially with the contagious Omicron variant. The university Return to Campus (RTC) committee will continue to monitor information shared about the new variant. The university has made it through the busiest period of the exams, the university hopes to finish the semester without any major changes to the exam period.
2. There is an indication that an announcement will be shared with the province today or on Friday regarding possible restrictions. The province has already made a few changes this week, with the main change at Carleton affecting the QR code we use in campus buildings. Specifically the Ice House will be affected since there are a lot of one-time visitors. Screening will need to be tweaked if visitors cannot use cuScreen and visitors will need to fill out a paper form and complete a sign in list for contact tracing.

Nancy's Remarks:

1. There was a student in the classroom setting who tested positive for the Omicron variant. The professor, TA and classmates who were in contact with the student were contacted and tests came back negative. Since Omicron is more contagious and affecting those who are double vaccinated, Carleton reviewed the cuScreen questions yesterday and adjustments will be made to the wording of the close contact question. Carleton's guidance differs from Ottawa Public Health with relation to those that are double vaccinated and in close contact with COVID-19, they are asked to stay home and not visit campus.

Questions:

1. **A concern was shared about the social distance at bus stops due to the lack of physical distancing.** It has been noted that individuals in these spaces are wearing masks, however the signage will be reviewed around the bus areas. Since the bus stops fall under the City of Ottawa, the university may be limited on what signage can be posted. This topic will be further reviewed at RTC.
2. **How have the efforts of communicating the role of the travel form changing?** We have changed the header on the form to indicate that the form is optional and only to be completed if the dean requests or requires it. A note has also been added to the form stating that the form is there to assist with travel risk planning. In addition, the Carleton COVID-19 website now has an FAQ to address this form. The Federal Government is also expected to speak to international travel.
3. **What is the role of the JHSC in relation to the steering committee?** The JHSC is to provide a health and safety perspective on the return to campus. If there are concerns discussed during the JHSC regarding health and safety and COVID-19, the chair or the EHS Director will bring this information to the RTC meeting that occurs twice a week.

4. **With Omicron variant cases rising, what does the winter term look like?** There have not been any official updates shared, however there are indications that the cases are going to increase. Right now the winter term is proceeding as planned, however it is predicted that this may change to online in January. More information will be shared with the university formally within the next week.
5. **Will there be restrictions to access to campus over Christmas? Will a schedule be in place or will swipe access be granted?** This will be discussed during Thursday's RTC meeting and then later discussed and shared with the JHSC.
6. **There were requests made from CUPE-4600 about the air quality and circulation report being shared with JHSC members.** The university has engaged with two consulting firms to conduct an evaluation of the air circulation. Most draft reports have been provided; however once it has been confirmed the final versions of these will be shared. The university follows the guidelines set out in ASHRAE 62.1. The university reviewed each of our buildings and determined if we met the ASHRAE recommendations. In addition to ASHRAE, a MERV-13 filter assessment was completed. A cautious approach was taken, filters were changed, and as a result outdoor air delivered to all spaces has been increased to ensure ventilation is working optimally. The standards that are being followed by the university are located on the university COVID-19 webpage under Building Preparation.
7. **How is the university making more masks available to faculty since tunnels are not available?** Kits have been provided through procurement as part of the return to campus process however we could discuss this concern with RTC. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
8. **Will there be N95 mask funding provided to departments?** Generally, N95 masks are not used unless specified for a specific job or task. If mandatory, EHS must complete a mask fit test to determine the appropriate mask.
9. **A concern was shared about the ventilation in bathrooms due to the lack of noise from running fans.** The ventilation in the washrooms on campus are designed to function without loud noises. The ductwork is normally located on the roofs of the buildings causing limited noise in the washrooms. It is building code to ensure that proper ventilation is provided.
10. **How does the increase to 66% capacity impact surrounding areas (for example, elevators, corridors, washrooms)?** For clarification, we have gone to 50% capacity. The ability to physical distance in areas such as corridors, washrooms and elevators is adequate and maintaining the distance is the responsibility of each individual. Given the mandatory mask policy, physical distancing is not as urgent if not possible in all small areas however strongly recommended.
11. **How do we ensure that the hand sanitizer dispensers on campus are kept full?** We currently have 2 kinds of stations on campus. The pump dispensers are monitored by our custodial team and the wall dispensers are monitored through a contract with Citron.

Next meeting

This is the last meeting before the winter holidays. The next meeting will be **Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at 10:00 AM**, Microsoft Teams.