

# OFFICE OF THE **PRESIDENT**



SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Dear Redhawk Community,

It has been over a year since we began the long journey of implementing and practicing numerous COVID-19 safety protocols. Although it has been challenging, we had a safe, strong, and successful academic year! This is in large part due to the adherence to safety protocols that I am proud to say you embraced wholeheartedly. I thank all of you for your contributions to this effort.

Cape Girardeau County's positivity rates and active case counts have consistently remained low since early March 2021, resulting in the county recently rescinding its face covering order. On May 13, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced a further easing of mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated people.

Given the low numbers of positive cases both on campus and in the region, and open access to the COVID-19 vaccine, we will adjust the [Protect the Nest](#) guidelines for the summer semester, effective May 19 through August 13, 2021. Guidelines for the fall 2021 semester will be established at a later date. For summer 2021,

- Social distancing limitations will be reduced from six (6) feet to three (3) feet indoors.
- Face coverings requirements are suspended for the summer semester, with the following exceptions:

- Face covering requirements in face-to-face classes during the remainder of the summer sessions will be a classroom management determination of the faculty teaching that specific class. Students are expected to adhere to the classroom guidance provided by the faculty member.
- Face coverings may be required for some summer camps, conferences, and University events. Please contact the camp or event administrator for details.

Everyone is asked to be respectful and mindful of individuals who may not be comfortable having interactions on campus without the use of face coverings by wearing your mask. The continued use of plexiglass shields, hand sanitizer and disinfectant spray is also still strongly encouraged.

In addition to the changes noted above, the following changes will take effect May 19.

- We will resume accepting reservations from external groups to use campus facilities.
- Faculty, staff, and students may participate in out-of-state business-related travel, in accordance with COVID-19 travel restriction for your destination. See the Protect the Nest Plan for more information.

We continue to examine the CDC guidelines and coordinate with the Cape Girardeau Public Health Center to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The Emergency Response Team will continue to meet this summer to monitor pandemic case numbers and discuss plans for the fall semester.

Additionally, we recognize that the COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective way to prevent the virus' spread. Consequently, we recommend that students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the campus consider getting vaccinated for the safety and well-being of our community. See the [Protect the Nest Plan](#) for more guidance on how to register for a vaccine.

Best wishes for a great summer, and we look forward to seeing all of you on campus next fall!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barlow", is written above a horizontal line.



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