To: All Employees

Dear Colleagues,

Happy new year from Messiah University! As the spring semester launches, Messiah’s Integration and Response Team would like to confirm some important information for a healthy start to our semester. Please read the below email carefully, as it also contains some important changes to campus COVID-19 protocols for spring 2022.

About Omicron

In recent weeks, the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been on the rise, both nationally and in our region and now represents the dominant number of COVID cases in the U.S. While trending milder in overall symptoms, Omicron continues to put individuals with underlying conditions at risk and is proving to be more transmissible than the Delta variant we experienced this fall. We are thankful for your cooperation and your care for our community that allowed Messiah to provide a fully in-person educational experience during the fall semester—and we ask for your continued help this spring as we manage the challenges of this new variant together.

What can I do to help keep our campus healthy this spring?

1) As always, assess your personal health before coming to campus: PLEASE do NOT report to work if:
   · You have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days
   · You have symptoms of COVID-19—including any cold or flu-like symptoms
   · You are a confirmed close contact to a COVID-19 positive individual.

   In any of these circumstances, regardless of your vaccination status, you are required to complete the Falcon Health Check-In on FalconLink. The Engle Center will then contact you to work with you on an individual plan of action/return. Employees experiencing symptoms may get tested on campus at no charge after contacting the Engle Center. All employees are required to report a positive test result via the Falcon Health Check-In on FalconLink.

2) You are strongly encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccination or a booster shot: While Messiah is not requiring employees to be vaccinated, or to receive a booster shot if already vaccinated, the University greatly appreciates our students and employees who have already been vaccinated or boostered for COVID-19. Please note that current research shows that the vaccines are highly effective at keeping people out of the hospital and booster shots are 50-88% effective against the Omicron variant.[i]

   As a reminder, Messiah University employees can be vaccinated and/or receive a booster for free on campus at the Engle Center (with the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine). To set up an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine, go to your HEALTH PORTAL, then choose MY FORMS from the menu bar and complete the form entitled COVID VACCINATION SCHEDULING FORM. Someone from the Health Center will be in touch to schedule your appointment.

3) Masks need to be worn indoors: As we navigate the current surge in COVID cases, we expect employees to continue to follow the University’s indoor masking policy as outlined at www.messiah.edu/together. Note: The University continues to strongly recommend the use of the high-filtration KN95 masks that are distributed on campus free of charge, which, when used properly, have been shown to have been shown to reduce COVID-19 infection by 53%.[2]

Announcing important protocol changes for spring semester

Most of the University’s fall mitigation practices will continue on campus, including current indoor
masking protocols. However, please visit Messiah’s COVID response blog to view several important changes to existing protocols for the spring semester based on recent CDC updates including changes related to quarantine, isolation, contact tracing and testing.

Any additional important changes or updates for the spring semester will be announced via email or the COVID response blog. We appreciate your work and dedication to Messiah University.

—The Messiah University Integration and Response Team

[i] SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern and variants under investigation in England Technical briefing: Update on hospitalisation and vaccine effectiveness for Omicron VOC-21NOV-01 (B.1.1.529) 31 December 2021

2] Effectiveness of public health measures in reducing the incidence of covid-19, SARS-CoV-2 transmission, and covid-19 mortality: systematic review and meta-analysis BMJ 2021;375:e068302: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj-2021-068302 (Published 18 November 2021)