Dear Messiah students and employees,

As we shared prior to the start of our spring semester, the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been on the rise, both nationally and in our region. At Messiah, we have also been experiencing a steady increase in cases since the start of undergraduate classes on Jan. 10. True to reports, this variant is proving more transmissible than the Delta variant we experienced this fall. While trending milder in overall symptoms, the rapid pace of Omicron is putting a strain on our campus health center, personnel and resources.

In these early weeks, Messiah’s COVID-19 Integration and Response Team has been monitoring our campus case numbers and trends and adjusting campus strategies and resources to be used most effectively in our quickly changing circumstances.

**Find Messiah’s student/employee COVID protocols online**

As we adapt, it is important for students and employees to know where to find the university’s most current COVID-19 protocols. In response, IRT has developed an online guide, with helpful links to the information you need when you need it. You can now find detailed instructions for what to do when you are symptomatic, test positive or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19—all in one place—on FalconLink. To locate, search for and bookmark the “Spring 2022 Campus COVID Protocols” tile or access directly via this link. This resource will be revised as protocols are adapted so students and employees know where to find the most up-do-date information.

**An important change in employee COVID protocols**

One significant and important adjustment is a change to employee protocols that will provide additional time and focus for the Engle Center to invest in student care. Effective immediately, employees are no longer expected to report their symptoms or COVID exposures, or secure clearance from the Engle Center to return to campus following isolation. Instead, Messiah provides protocols that employees are required to follow, including options for symptomatic testing, and encourages faculty and staff to consult with off-campus medical providers as needed, but the Engle Center is not currently resourced to provide care and consultation for employees. Full details are available in the online protocol document introduced above.

We have already begun forming meaningful learning, relationships and experiences this spring. As always, the safety of our campus community is a critical priority, and we look forward to the promise and opportunity of our campus life together in the semester ahead.

—The Messiah University COVID-19 Integration and Response Team