

To our Campus Community,

As we begin a new semester, I want to provide you with details about how we are keeping our community safe while continuing our vital work together.

At the start of this semester, we know we will experience many more cases of COVID, flu and cold viruses.

The Omicron variant is much more transmissible than previous COVID variants. It also appears much less likely to cause serious illness for those who are vaccinated, particularly those who have received a booster shot. Experts expect that the flu will be particularly harsh this season. As such, and as our health care system continues to respond to the pandemic, it's more important than ever to receive your flu shot and COVID vaccine. There are plentiful opportunities for everyone to receive a COVID vaccine booster as well. [Locate a vaccine or booster here.](#)

Montana is anticipated to experience a peak in cases in early to mid-February. Many virus symptoms are similar, and anyone with a sore throat, runny nose, cough, fatigue, and mild headache should stay home.

FVCC is here for you, and we will assist you in classes or working remotely if any illness impacts you. The FVCC Student Health Clinic offers free COVID testing services.

If you are impacted by COVID or another lengthy illness, please contact COVID@fvcc.edu or submit a self-reporting form [here](#).

We continue to ensure the health and safety of our community, as we have done so well for nearly two years while also honoring our critical mission of education.

Continuing our semester on campus — with students living in Founders Hall and most of our courses being offered in-person — remains a priority, as we vigilantly monitor the trajectory of viruses and do what needs to be done to protect our community.

Here's how to help:

- **Vaccines and booster shots are critical:** Vaccines are — without question — the best defense against serious illness or hospitalization. And boosters have proven particularly effective against Omicron. Get your shots if you haven't. It's essential. [You can learn more here.](#)
- **To bolster that effort, we will offer a vaccine incentive campaign:** On January 13, 1:00 – 5:00, and January 19, 10:00 – 2:00, Blake Hall Lobby area, \$10 Town Pump gift cards per vaccine will be given to students and employees who have received COVID vaccinations. Proof of vaccine will be required.
- **We will provide masks and face shields for our community:** Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance about the prevention of COVID and

flu, wearing face coverings is the best protection. [Learn more about CDC mask guidance](#). Masks are available in classrooms, lobbies, and door entrances across campus.

- **We are adopting the latest isolation protocols as recommended.** According to the CDC, “People with COVID-19 should isolate for five days, and if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours), follow that by five days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of infecting people they encounter. The change is motivated by science demonstrating that the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days before the onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after.
- **We will communicate frequently and adjust as necessary:** Our COVID Response Team (CQRT) meets weekly to review the ongoing situation and provide updates to stay abreast on campus.

As a community, we have met every challenge, at every moment, throughout the pandemic. We’ve continued to educate students and honor our mission in Flathead and Lincoln counties.

I know the continued strain and stress have taxed us in ways we never imagined. I’ve been amazed by your work and the compassion you have for each other and our community.

We can do this together. We will communicate often, be flexible, make changes when necessary and continue our efforts to stay safe.

Thanks for all you do.

Jane A. Karas, President