August 19, 2021

Dear professors:

During the info sessions for faculty who are teaching face-to-face classes this fall, faculty requested standardized syllabus language about the mask wearing and vaccination requirement and health/safety practices. When new information becomes available, this document will be updated and shared with faculty.

We offer some suggested language that you might consider using to communicate with students. The intent is for faculty to choose any part that might be useful, pertinent, and time-saving.

We suggest the following means by which these messages may be delivered to students (using multiple venues may increase the possibility that your messages reach students):

* Canvas announcements
* Class syllabus as a document (Word or PDF) and syllabus using CidiLabs ([Faculty Center for Learning Technology](https://www.mtsac.edu/fclt/) can help with that)
* Email message from professors via Canvas or college email

Sincerely,

Office of Instruction

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Welcome (back), students!

It’s wonderful to have you in our class! I’m excited to teach this class and to join you on our learning journey together this semester. Fall 2021 is still an unusual time, so I want to support students by sharing helpful information for a healthier, safer, and successful semester for everyone. Please check the [Mt. SAC’s Health](https://www.mtsac.edu/health/index.html) webpage updates frequently.

Below is a list of critical information, health and safety requirements, and support resources for students:

**Health Check and Reporting Cases**

Thank you for keeping yourself and everyone safe. Students are advised to know about and to follow these college expectations related to COVID-19:

**Before you go on campus, every day you go on campus**: you are expected to review if you are feeling any COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, new loss of taste/smell, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, sneezing, nausea, diarrhea, and so on.

**If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms,** you must do the following:

* **STAY HOME** and fill out the [Student Health Check Form](https://www.mtsac.edu/health/covidscreen.html). Filling out this form or calling Student Health Center will trigger further instructions from Mt. SAC’s contact tracer, including where to get tested for COVID and what to do depending on the test results.
* **GO HOME** or REPORT TO STUDENT HEALTH CENTER - Students who are sick with COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19, are asked to fill out the [Student Health Check Form](https://www.mtsac.edu/health/covidscreen.html) or contact the Student Health Center at (909) 274-4400 as soon as possible.
* Contact your professor(s) to let them know if you will miss class that day and possibly longer depending on the outcome of your test for COVID-19.

**While you are on campus**: you are expected to follow the Mt. SAC requirements for health and safety related to COVID-19.

**Masks are required for everyone**, including students, indoors at all times with very few exemptions allowed such as a verified medical/health accommodation or if wearing the mask interferes with a learning activity. Professors may require mask wearing for outdoor learning activities. Students who do not have a mask may pick one up from their professors in class or in Student Services Center (Building 9B) or [instructional division offices](https://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/divisions.html).

Students with health/medical reasons who need an exemption from the mask requirement are to contact [ACCESS Center](https://www.mtsac.edu/access/) for an accommodation. Students who are approved to have an exemption from mask wearing will be issued a document.

Students are expected to comply with college employees’ directions regarding mask wearing unless they have an approved accommodation through Mt. SAC’s ACCESS Center. Students who do not comply may be dismissed for up to two class meetings and will be subject to student disciplinary actions following the professor’s [Student Misconduct Report](https://www.mtsac.edu/studentlife/students.html), per Board Policy 5500 and Administrative Procedure 5520 (view links for details):

* [BP 5500 – Standards of Conduct](https://www.mtsac.edu/governance/trustees/apbp/BP5500.pdf)
* [AP 5520 – Student Discipline Procedures](https://www.mtsac.edu/governance/trustees/apbp/AP5520.pdf)

**Vaccination requirement or weekly testing with negative results:** Vaccination remains one of the most effective ways to reduce symptoms, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19 if you are sick with COVID and to combat the spread of the coronavirus to others.

Unvaccinated students will be required to (a) be vaccinated, or (b) be tested weekly with negative results.

**Free Vaccination clinics** are available twice a week on campus.

**Free COVID testing is available**.

**What to do if you have been exposed to COVID-19**:

First, here are helpful definitions:

**Close contact/exposure** is someone who was exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 while they were infectious if: 1) you were within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period; or 2) You had unprotected contact with body fluids and/or secretions from someone with COVID-19.

**Quarantine** is used to keep someone who has been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

* If you are vaccinated, you do not have to quarantine or get tested if you don’t have symptoms after close contact with someone with COVID-19. You may continue to go on campus and self-check every day before you go on campus for any symptoms of COVID-19.
* If you have been exposed to COVID-19 and you **tested** ***positive***, whether you are vaccinated or not, then you should **STAY HOME** and fill out the Student Health Check Form or contact Student Health Services at (909) 274-4400 to report it. Doing so will trigger follow-up activities including contact tracing, quarantining yourself for 10 days, and confirming a date for your return to campus.
* If you have been exposed to COVID-19 and you test negative, you may return to campus to classes and on-campus commitment. Every day before you go on campus, you will do a self-check for any symptoms of COVID-19.
* If you live with someone who was exposed but has not tested positive, you do not have to quarantine.

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Mt. SAC’s got you covered … with lots of ***FREE*** [student support resources](https://www.mtsac.edu/studentservices/), some examples are:

* [Financial aid](https://www.mtsac.edu/financialaid/) for assistance with enrollment fees and living expenses (enrolling full-time may get more funding than part-time students, and part-time students may be eligible for some financial aid.)
* [Counselors](https://www.mtsac.edu/counseling/) for following your education plan and finishing your program, and more
* [Basic Needs Resources (including food and housing support)](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mtsac.edu%2Fbasic-needs%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cmchen%40mtsac.edu%7Ce21b7ba3027c47e243ba08d955e60e6f%7Ccc4d4bf20a9e4240aedea7d1d688f935%7C0%7C0%7C637635268831694258%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=q%2FdIbxbVtoyxKMO6bcKaDrzJB1FToiXDb7yL2JjqcFs%3D&reserved=0)
* [Student Health Services/Mental Health Services](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mtsac.edu%2Fhealthcenter%2Findex.html&data=04%7C01%7Cmchen%40mtsac.edu%7Ce21b7ba3027c47e243ba08d955e60e6f%7Ccc4d4bf20a9e4240aedea7d1d688f935%7C0%7C0%7C637635268831704222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=9akj%2Bn6CzTqIfYjuoXUoVYWoxZ9feU%2F14qkixZz9evA%3D&reserved=0)
* [Loaner laptops](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/05c5576dc6864592bde8f1abe10593ef) and mifi (for accessing the Internet) are available for currently enrolled students for the entire term
* [Help on how to use Canvas](https://www.mtsac.edu/asac/) and other software tools, and how to learn online
* [Access to textbooks on reserve](https://www.mtsac.edu/library/pdfdocs/HowToRequestDigitalChaptersofaTextbook.pdf) in digital and print format for many courses
* The [Library](https://www.mtsac.edu/library) offers research workshops, research assistance, and lots of resources
* [Tutoring](https://www.mtsac.edu/tutoringcenters/) in many subjects in-person, online, nearly 24/7

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**Parking and walk paths** on campus:

The campus is undergoing construction, and those zones are blocked off for everyone’s safety. That can affect how much time you’ll need to get from the parking lot to your classroom. Students are advised to regularly check this interactive [Mt. SAC campus map](https://www.mtsac.edu/maps/) and to expect that there may be changes that don’t get updated on the map right away. Please give yourself extra time so you’ll get to class and other campus commitments on time.

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In response to faculty request for suggestions on **student attendance policy, make up work, lack of compliance with college requirements** (e.g., mask wearing), we offer some suggestions for your consideration as you work with students who are having a hard time staying current in the class due to becoming sick or other life challenges.

A context for these suggestions is to help make students feel comfortable when they are ill to stay home and still have access to their class materials and assignments. If students can continue to study and do their assignments while they need to be quarantined, then they may be more encouraged to stay home when they are sick.

Some suggestions for consideration:

* **Departmental crowd-sourcing for ideas** about departmental-level absence and make-up work policies; many faculty already share ideas and syllabuses with one another.
* **Department-level guidelines** about absences, make-up work, and extra credit may exist already.
* **The Incomplete grading option**: it allows for students who have completed course requirements through the 14th week of 16-week classes or after 85% of a short-term class to petition for an Incomplete grade. On the student transcript, it displays as “I” as a grade. By approving the petition, the professor agrees to giving students their missed work and helping them complete the work within one year from the time the petition is approved.
* **Flexibility for students’ make-up work**: as one example, if students were to miss 3 weeks out of a 16-week class during which they made no contact, no log into Canvas, did not turn in assignments, then faculty may want to consider directly emailing the students. Please consider giving students a staggered timeline to make up the work one week at a time per one week of missed work. To illustrate with an example below in a 16-week class (it’d be more challenging in a 8-week class):

Week/Work Missed Make up Work Due

3rd week 4th week

4th week 5th week

5th week 6th week

* **Student petition for an Excused Withdraw (EW)**. Depending on the discipline, faculty may want to identify the point in the semester at which it is highly unlikely the students will be able to make up missed learning and assignments and still keep up with new materials and pass the class.
* **Broadening the definition of “attendance”** to include different forms of participation, synchronously or asynchronously; here are a few examples:
	+ discussion posts within a week by Sunday at 11:59 PM,
	+ an assignment that can be done by themselves without having to be in real-time with the class,
	+ view this film and write a one-paragraph (between 5-7 sentences) on what surprised you about the film vs. the book.

While students are not feeling well and catching up on/making up work, please consider adding some support options:

* **Visit your virtual office hours** to ask questions or discuss their work, e.g., 20 minutes check-in weekly if they need several days or weeks to make up work.

Having an appointed time to check in with you provides some structure to their catch-up period. Being able to engage their learning with you weekly can be a powerful motivation to keep going and work on their studies: regular and meaningful contact with professors and college staff is cited as a key factor in increasing student retention and success in the higher education literature.

* Require students to use [tutoring centers](https://www.mtsac.edu/tutoringcenters/) where **online** hours with tutors, staff, and faculty can help them get caught up, and students would become familiar with using tutoring.
* Require students to use the [library](https://www.mtsac.edu/library/) with many **online** resources: with librarians (24/7 chat reference), research help workshops, and more. Connecting students to the library can mean students discover the many ways the library is an important, money-saving, and time-saving resource for their learning.