

Notes from December 30, 2021 Employee Relations Committee meeting

The Employee Relations Committee met on December 30, 2021 to discuss planning for a safe return to in-person instruction for the Spring 2022 semester. Topics covered during our meeting included discussions about campuses planning to start the semester remotely, COVID booster shot requirements and enforcement, and free on-campus COVID testing for faculty and librarians.

The MSCA and management discussed the following regarding the start of the Spring 2022 semester.

Vaccines: MSCA members are required to be vaccinated, which includes receiving booster vaccines as recommended by the CDC. Please review the [Day](#) and [DGCE](#) memoranda of agreements for details. Universities are working to provide vaccination clinics on campus and will be communicating with the MSCA regarding dates, times and locations. We have posted the [current list of clinics](#) that we are aware of.

The MSCA reiterated our understanding that vaccine there has been no change in the ability for members to apply for vaccine exemptions in accordance with the vaccine mandate memoranda. Management confirmed that.

Health and Safety: The state universities continue their commitment to comply with the health and safety agreements reached last fall. For details regarding the health and safety commitments agreed to see the [Day](#) and [DGCE](#) memoranda of agreement.

Mask Wearing: At this time, all nine state universities continue to have a mask mandate in place, requiring mask wearing regardless of vaccination status. Please see the [mask wearing memorandum](#) that covers both the day and DGCE units.

Temporary Remote Start: At the time of our meeting, only two state universities had announced that all classes would begin remotely. Today (January 7, 2022) we were given an update on which state universities will be begin remotely. The [list of which state universities will begin remotely, and the dates](#) is posted on the MSCA website, and will be updated as we become aware of changes.

The union and management acknowledge that the COVID pandemic is unpredictable and agree that if a campus experiences a COVID emergency, the health and safety of our campus community will take precedence. In the case of a campus COVID emergency, management will make every effort to inform the union prior to announcing any change to the academic calendar or instructional modalities.

Changes in Modality: The MSCA asked if faculty will be allowed to switch to a remote teaching mode before the Spring 2022 semester begins. In response, the state universities emphasized its commitment to offering students in-person instruction and an on-campus educational experience. We were told that faculty will not be permitted to switch to a remote modality. Faculty members who need a reasonable accommodation should follow their respective university's reasonable accommodation process.

COVID Testing: The state university presidents and the MSCA are committed to the health and safety of our students and employees. We strongly encourage members to receive a COVID test prior to the start of the Spring 2022 semester. Please remember that your university provides you access to free, on-campus, asymptomatic COVID-19 testing. If you are symptomatic or feel sick, please stay home, call your doctor and seek testing off campus.

MSCA ERC Members

CJ O'Donnell, MSCA President

Aruna Krishnamurthy, MSCA Organizing and Unity Leader

Irina Seceleanu, BSU Chapter President