MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Staff

FROM: Mark B. Rosenberg

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update and Actions to Stay Safe

DATE: December 30, 2021

Dear members of the university community,

The ongoing COVID-19 situation is fast-developing and impactful at every level – family, community and our university.

It is even more critical to take necessary steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

At FIU, we will continue to operate under the guidance of the State University System and the Florida Board of Governors. FIU is scheduled to reopen on Monday, Jan. 3 and begin classes on Monday, Jan. 10, as planned.

**Wear a face covering**

Omicron seems to be the dominant variant in circulation at the moment. As we have seen, it spreads quickly. Health officials say the best masks are those that cover your nose and mouth completely and fit snugly to avoid any gaps along the sides of your face.

**Vending machines and other distribution points** at MMC, BBC, Engineering Center and FIU@I-75 have been restocked with masks and are available for the university community.

**Get tested**

Testing continues to be pivotal to our ability to continue functioning as a society and a university.

If you have been to large gatherings or crowded public places in the last few days, please get tested – even if you are vaccinated and received a booster – to help avert the spread of the virus.
If you have symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus, please get tested right away and keep your distance from others while you await results. If your test comes back positive, please follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention isolation guidelines. The university is currently evaluating the CDC’s most recent changes to isolation and quarantine guidelines.

Below is the schedule for COVID-19 testing on campus, which is available through our partnership with Curative. Testing is by appointment only.

- **PG5 trailer at MMC**: 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Sunday
- **Parkview at MMC**: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday
- **BBC**: 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Sunday (may be temporarily closed due to staff shortages)

Testing will be available during regular hours of operation on December 31 only at the PG5 site at MMC. Please note that all on-campus sites will be closed January 1.

Testing will resume with regular hours at FIU’s clinical sites on Monday, January 3. Faculty and staff should call FIU Health at 305-348-3627 to schedule an appointment. Tests are administered Monday-Friday. Students should call the FIU Student Health Center at 305-348-2401 to make an appointment at MMC or 305-919-5620 to make an appointment at BBC.

Testing is also widely available in our community. The testing site at Tropical Park has transitioned to a 24-hour, seven days a week schedule. The testing site at the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair grounds adjacent to MMC has reopened for drive thru testing from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. seven days a week.

Convenient home testing has become very popular, but it is important to know that these rapid antigen tests are most reliable when used by symptomatic people. If you have been exposed and have no symptoms, it is best to take the more reliable PCR test administered at one of the testing locations.

**Get vaccinated, boosted**

**Vaccines remain the most powerful tool against the spread of COVID-19.** If you are already vaccinated, thank you for doing your part to keep us safe. Remember that boosters are now widely available. Please use this time before the start of the semester to get your booster, if you have not yet received it.

If you are not vaccinated, now is the time to do so. While evidence shows that people who are vaccinated can get COVID-19, their symptoms are usually
milder. If you are unvaccinated, you are assuming a significant risk to your health and may be contributing to the spread of the virus.

Testing and vaccination remain key to your health and mobility – and that of our community – during this time.

On-campus vaccinations will resume on Monday, Jan. 10 at the Student Health centers and the FIU Health Clinic. For a list of off-site Miami-Dade County vaccination locations, you can visit FIU’s Panthers Protecting Panthers website. Vaccines are also widely available at pharmacies, usually by appointment.

Here are other things you can do to help slow the spread of Omicron, especially during the holidays:

- Whenever possible, avoid crowded indoor spaces and use face coverings where they make sense to protect you and others.

- Before the start of each day on campus, please complete the P3 app questionnaire.

- COVID-19 is not the only airborne disease: We are in the middle of flu season. Flu vaccines are widely available at local pharmacies and at our clinic sites on campus.

Taking these simple steps will help ensure that you have a safe and healthy holiday season.

If you find yourself in need of assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out. At FIU we have resources available to support our students through our Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) as well as our faculty and staff through our Office of Employee Assistance. As always, all services are offered in the strictest confidentiality.

Please remain alert to this fast-developing situation and look for additional updates from FIU and the local media. Thank you for your cooperation as we work together to keep our Panther family safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Rosenberg
President