



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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To: Montana Board of Regents; Montana University System Chief Executive Officers;  
Montana Community College Presidents

From: Clayton T. Christian, Commissioner of Higher Education

Date: February 11, 2022

Subject: **COVID-19 Update: Phasing Out Various COVID-19 Protocols on MUS Campuses**

After nearly two years of grappling with COVID-19, there is no doubt that we are seeing positive trends on our campuses, across Montana, and throughout the country. Case counts are headed in the right direction, hospitalization rates have stabilized, and there is convincing evidence that most individuals affected by Omicron experience milder symptoms than was the case for individuals affected by earlier COVID-19 variants. This is particularly true for individuals who are fully vaccinated. It is also important to note that, under your leadership, MUS campuses continue to provide access to testing and vaccines and sufficient staffing to deliver an excellent academic and student life experience.

Just as we have intensified our COVID-19 restrictions and protocols during times of increasing threat, we should respond to the improving conditions we see today by easing COVID-19 restrictions and protocols on our campuses. We see this process already underway all around us, in homes, businesses, community organizations, and in our K-12 school districts across the state.

I write today with guidance for each campus to begin the process of phasing out COVID-19 restrictions as soon as possible. Areas in which restrictions should be phased out include, but are not limited to mask requirements, event size restrictions, and any remaining restrictions on out-of-state and international travel. This decision is made as part of our ongoing partnership with the Board of Regents, public health officials, and other statewide authorities, and all of you as campus leaders.

Given that conditions remain variable, the timing, pace, and sequence of the phase-out process is flexible. My expectation is that we will coordinate our efforts whenever and wherever it makes sense, and that campuses will stay in close communication with my office as they develop their phase-out plans.

As the MUS, we will continue to assess conditions and remain flexible in our pandemic response. Thank you for your leadership, and best wishes for a terrific spring semester.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clayton T. Christian".

Clayton T. Christian  
Commissioner of Higher Education