

**To:** Montgomery College Community

**From:** Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, Interim President

**Subject:** Important Guidance for the Start of Classes on January 24

**Date:** January 19, 2022

Good afternoon. As you know, MC spring semester classes begin next Monday, January 24, 2022. The College plans to resume all classes in the modality in which they are currently scheduled: some are face-to-face, some are online, some are distance learning. Several factors have influenced this decision:

- Recent decline in local COVID-19 omicron infections and models of omicron that suggest continued decline
- Evidence that the omicron variant causes less serious infections among the vaccinated and boosted
- Requirement for employees and students to be vaccinated or testing (where exceptions granted)
- Easy access to booster shots, and an employee requirement to be boosted when eligible
- Wider availability of testing
- Compliance on campuses with health protocols including masking indoors
- Wider availability of personal protective equipment, and the plan for providing KN95 masks to the College community
- Use of MC's Daily Health Assessment to keep potentially infected persons out of face-to-face contact

Employees should get a booster shot as soon as possible, according to their eligibility. Boosters can be obtained at [several sites](#) in the county, including on the Germantown Campus. Details on the College's verification of boosters will be forthcoming. Coronavirus tests are also more [widely available](#) than in the past. At-home COVID-19 test kits are [now available for free](#) through a federal site (four per household). Anyone who tests positive should stay home, follow MC's protocols, and report the infection to [publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:publichealth@montgomerycollege.edu).

The College is continuing to consult county and state health officials on evolving health protocols, and carefully watches the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I want to thank the College Council and leaders of our collective bargaining units who have engaged in consultation with College leadership. In addition, MC's Return to Campus Coronavirus Advisory Team (RTCAT) continues to provide me with timely advice drawn from their deep knowledge of conditions on the ground. The health and safety of our community are our top priorities and I know you will keep this in mind when observing our established MC protocols.

I understand the challenges that the pandemic and ever-changing conditions places on all of us. So many new dimensions have been added to our personal and professional lives. Montgomery College faculty and staff have risen to the occasion to fulfill our mission in the midst of these challenges. I have the deepest gratitude and appreciation for your dedication, commitment, and flexibility as we launch the spring semester!