



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 29, 2021

Dear UNE Community,

Yesterday, in accordance with the latest recommendations from the Maine CDC, I announced we would be changing our masking policy to require masks for all individuals on our Biddeford Campus regardless of vaccination status. Shortly after the Maine CDC announced its new recommendations, the U.S. CDC downgraded York County's COVID-19 transmission rate from substantial to moderate, which means York County is no longer considered a county in which masking is recommended for vaccinated individuals. The change in county status and the resulting changes in CDC masking recommendations have created considerable confusion across Maine and, indeed, across the country, over the last 24 hours.

After consulting with the COVID-19 Response Committee, we have decided to revert to our policy that people who are fully vaccinated can decide whether or not to wear a mask when indoors on our campuses. This decision is supported by the high compliance to date with our vaccination requirement. Even though the deadline for compliance with the policy (August 16) is still more than two weeks away, approximately 90% of students, faculty, and professional staff who are currently on our campuses are already in compliance, and this number is growing daily. The current scientific consensus is that vaccination is our best defense against illness, and especially serious illness, from the COVID-19 virus. People who are not fully vaccinated will continue to be required to wear a mask at all times when indoors on our campuses.

We know that transmission rates in Maine vary from county to county and that they will change, sometimes daily. Therefore, we encourage you to stay updated so you can make the most informed personal decision possible about whether to wear a mask, even if you are fully vaccinated. That information can be found on the U.S. CDC's website: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

We will continue to monitor federal and state guidelines as they evolve and will keep you informed promptly of any needed changes to our policies.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President