



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

August 20, 2021

Dear UNE Community,

In response to the increasing rate of COVID-19 transmission across Maine and the nation due to the Delta variant, and the analysis of data this week related to the potential risk of transmission among vaccinated individuals, the COVID-19 Response Committee has made the decision to temporarily re-institute a mandatory indoor masking policy for everyone on UNE's campuses regardless of vaccination status, effective immediately. We will re-evaluate this policy in three weeks and make a determination at that time whether we can lift the masking requirement.

Masks are not required while eating in designated dining spaces (i.e., those listed here, as well as commuter/professional staff lounges with adjacent seating areas, and designated study areas) though masks will be required when not eating in these spaces. Masks may be removed momentarily while drinking in other public spaces. They are also not required in dorm rooms or when alone in private offices.

We had hoped to avoid requiring masks at this stage of the pandemic given our vaccine mandate and our exceptionally high vaccination rate. However, given the risk of breakthrough infections and transmission from the highly contagious Delta variant, we believe wearing a mask indoors is a reasonable way to add a layer of protection for our community as many of our students return to our campuses for the fall term. We hope the policy will be temporary.

I want to stress how deeply appreciative I am of our community's overwhelming compliance with our vaccination requirement. I know that after taking that important step this may feel like a setback. We have planned an academic year that is rich with the activities and experiences our students have been looking forward to, and this step will help ensure that we are able to carry through with those plans. I ask for your patience as we navigate this stage of the pandemic. As always, we will continue to evaluate our policies regularly, guided by the available science and prioritizing the safety and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President