



October 1, 2021

Dear faculty, staff, and students,

Fall break is approaching, and I know many of you are looking forward to spending time with friends, enjoying a short getaway or simply having some quality alone time. As with any time away from campus, this period presents both challenges and opportunities. It's critically important that we all keep our guard up and remember to wear masks if we are in crowded indoor spaces, and to take other measures to protect ourselves and avoid spreading COVID-19 to others.

COVID-19 rates remain very high in our community, and the health risks are serious, especially in those with underlying health conditions. This week, the CDC shared data on the risks of symptomatic [COVID-19 in pregnant women](#), who have a 70% increased risk of death if they get COVID-19 and require hospitalization. Hospital occupancy rates in the Upstate remain virtually unchanged from last week – 98.7% in Spartanburg County, 83% in Greenville County, according to Wednesday's DHEC report. Vaccines are the best way to protect ourselves and our community, and alleviate the burden on our health-care systems and frontline workers. If you are unvaccinated, start by getting your first dose at today's [Vax UP clinic](#).

Health Services

A Pfizer vaccine clinic is taking place today in the Spartan Rec Center. Details can be found [here](#). Walk-ins for Dose 1 are welcome.

[Testing Tuesdays](#) will resume weekly beginning Oct. 5. Please take advantage of this service if you plan on spending time over fall break with someone who is high risk, or if you will be travelling in a group (including carpooling home). "Be Safe Over Fall Break" saliva testing will be held Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Spartan Rec Center. Getting tested before the break will protect your friends and family.

Remember, if you feel sick, call Health Services at 864-503-5191 to schedule testing immediately.

Congratulations to this week's Vax UP winners: students Juliana Franco, Allison Hart, Destiny Roman, John Wren, Sarah Boone and Tanya Leverant, and faculty/staff members Renu Pariyadath and Daniel Davis. Be sure to upload your completed vaccination card to uscupstate.edu/myhealth to be eligible for the Wednesday drawings. Students must be degree-seeking in order to qualify for cash prizes or a tuition waiver.

Academic Affairs

Provost Schecter will be holding virtual office hours from 4-5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 4, and from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Oct. 5. As he has conveyed to faculty, these informal meetings are a time to discuss any questions or concerns about the semester. Links to join each of the meetings were included in an email Dr. Schecter sent out to faculty earlier this week. Please contact him if you did not receive this information.

Facilities

Director Fred Scott, Facilities Management, has received confirmation that the 25 portable HEPA filter units that will be placed in some classrooms to help with air filtration, have been shipped and should arrive soon. Air handlers serving our buildings are regularly bringing fresh air in at recommended intervals, and UV light systems are continuing to be installed in the units. These measures help ensure our faculty, staff and students are learning and working in a safe, healthy environment.

I know many of us feel fatigue from this pandemic, but we can't afford to lose vigilance now. Thank you for your commitment to our campus and doing what is right for our community.

Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,



Bennie L. Harris
Chancellor

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***Up* is where we live.**