

December 22, 2021

Dear BCCC Faculty and Staff:

I know we are all elated that the Fall semester has concluded and we can look forward to some needed relaxation over the holiday break. After 15 months of working in a virtual world, returning back to campus this semester was tough for everyone, but in particular our students. I received many notes from our students. Some expressed concern relating to operational issues that affected them and others simply wanted to acknowledge the positive support they received from many of you. Our commitment remains to continue to recognize and prepare for change and doing what best meets the needs of our students – they are counting on us to pull everything together and stay on track.

At the start of the Fall 2021 semester, BCCC management and staff returned to campus with a hybrid work schedule. The College leadership team returned in September 2021. BCCC staff returned to a 4-day on campus, one-day remote schedule the first week of October 2021. Public Safety and Facilities staff have been on campus throughout the pandemic ensuring on-going operations and completing upgrades to various building systems. Throughout the 2021 Fall semester, virtual and on-line classes were scheduled. For the health sciences, limited in-person labs and clinical instruction allowed students to complete degree programs and certificate/licensing requirements. The faculty laid the groundwork, and set the pace and tone for these students to engage and get the time to work through program requirements.

For the upcoming Spring semester, BCCC will return to the regular Monday through Friday schedule and resume services. Most of our two-year counterpart institutions have resumed greater levels of on-campus services as well. I am deeply aware that some of you are concerned with the return to campus for the Spring semester and face-to-face classes – the Cabinet and me share the concern as COVID has rocked our world. If we receive information from the State/City, the CDC or the Health Department that calls for new mandates pertaining to COVID-19 or variants, this could likely change aspects of our anticipated return to campus. We will monitor closely any information that will necessitate further operational change and send this communication to you as quickly as possible.

We are working diligently preparing for the Spring. The IT department has been busy in the classrooms and computer labs to ensure that technology is in working order. Discussions have taken place across Cabinet areas and faculty and staff offices were visited to determine the need for additional headsets, videocams and speakers; orders are being submitted. Many facilities projects are in process with repairs to heating and cooling systems or changeovers for new systems; the construction on the new loop road for the campus is well underway and all personnel have vacated from Harper Hall which awaits its demolition; the expansion and renovation of the student center is anticipated to be completed late in February; the final plans for the demolition of the downtown Bard building are finalized; the entrance to the campus will see change to the primary signage and the security kiosk; life safety upgrades are on schedule for the Life Science building and West Pavilion; the new ERP (Banner) is well underway with the finance, human resources, student, financial aid, and student accounts modules; and the Fine Arts Wing and Physical Education Center will have major restroom renovations. More to come!

The Spring President's Forum is scheduled for January 4 through the 7, 2022 with a host of professional development sessions; a tentative outline will be provided. The Faculty Senate meeting will take place during the Forum week on January 7 and Senate President Dr. Katana Hall will provide the meeting details for the faculty.

We are continuing to follow CDC and Baltimore City Health Department guidelines and encourage all members of the community to get vaccinated and use precautions to fight the spread of COVID. At this time, BCCC does not require vaccinations, but requires those on campus to wear a mask, maintain social distancing, and self-monitor for symptoms. In addition, temperature checks will be required upon entry to a BCCC facility. Those with an elevated temperature may not enter and will be encouraged to consult with their healthcare provider. BCCC continues to host a CVS clinic on the campus and community members may get COVID tested on campus at no cost; we may also have vaccinations available again onsite.

Facemask and social distancing requirements remain in effect and PPE has been distributed and made readily available. Plexiglass has been placed in a number of common reception areas and will be available if needed for individuals in front facing offices where students are individually served. To ensure the on-going safety of the BCCC Community, COVID protocols for social distancing, face-coverings, temperature checks, and self-monitoring will be followed. Public Safety will monitor entrances at each building and patrol the campus locations. Extra masks are available from Public Safety in each building, but personnel are expected to bring their own.

In the event that a person reports an elevated temperature or other COVID symptoms while on campus, they will be asked to leave campus to consult with their healthcare provider. The College will monitor COVID-related incidents on campus. Public Safety serves as the point of contact in each building to respond to any COVID-related issues or concerns. The following summarizes safety requirements:

BCCC COVID Safety Requirements

- Masks will be required indoors at all BCCC facilities regardless of vaccination status.
- Social Distancing and limited class size will be enforced.
- Limited large-group functions will be scheduled on campus.
- No group dining functions, and the café is temporarily closed.
- All BCCC employees are encouraged to be fully vaccinated or tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis. On-site testing is available through the CVS clinic.
- Students taking in-person classes or using in-person services are also encouraged to be fully vaccinated or tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis.

COVID Response Protocol

If an employee or student is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, do not come to campus. Common COVID-19 symptoms are:

- Fever or chills
- Cough Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

The College's Public Safety staff will advise the appropriate supervisors, employees, faculty and staff on next steps. Public Safety will manage each individual case from the initial report to clearance to return to campus. A College representative will contact any campus-related individuals that the employee or student has come into close contact with, stating that they must quarantine until further notice because they may have been exposed to a presumptively ill person while on campus, unless the individual was fully vaccinated prior to the exposure. To the extent possible, the College will not disclose personally identifiable information. Local health departments may also conduct contact tracing and advise employees and students of next steps regarding testing and quarantine requirements.

Federal law prohibits employers from discharging or in any manner discriminating against an employee for reporting work-related injuries or illness and from discriminating against an employee for exercising rights under, or as a result of actions that are required by, federal law. Federal law also protects the employee from retaliation for filing an occupational safety or health complaint, reporting a work-related injuries or illness or otherwise exercising any rights afforded by the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

During the December Board of Trustees meeting, I also responded to a number of points and questions below raised by faculty regarding the Spring semester return to campus. Some of these points are also detailed in the above paragraphs:

- *Current Public Safety and Facilities schedule is not articulated.*
Public Safety staff monitor the campus at all times (24/7). This includes staff at each building entrance and on patrol of the main campus and all other campus locations.
- *Current safety protocols unarticulated.*
All COVID protocols are based on Baltimore City Department of Health and CDC Guidelines. These are posted on the BCCC website.
- *No guidance for return to campus.*
Updates have been provided from the President and Cabinet and on the BCCC website. Updates should also be a regular part of your discussions during departmental meetings.
- *Would students be required to be vaccinated and wear masks to attend physical classes?*
Currently, there is no vaccine mandate. However, there is a city-wide mask mandate for all those in public. Given the surge in cases in Maryland, we are reviewing a vaccine requirement for faculty, staff and students; it is anticipated that the State will move in the direction of a vaccine mandate. Information will then be provided about the process for validating vaccination status.

- *Will students be required to self-check for temperature, if so, how will the College enforce exclusion of students with elevated temperature or prevent students who develop high fever from attending?*
Temperature checks will be performed at the entrance to each building on campus. In the event of an elevated temperature, the person should leave campus and report to their healthcare provider. Public Safety is responsible for ensuring compliance and reporting of all COVID-related incidents.
- *Should a student who has been observed sneezing and coughing repeatedly in a face to face class be asked to leave or be excused from the classroom?*
In the event of COVID symptoms, a student may be excused or asked to leave the class. Public Safety will ensure compliance with COVID protocols.
- *Under what conditions should a faculty member engage in a student's well-being because of COVID?*
Faculty should report COVID-related symptoms or incidents; also relate the incidents to your supervisors. Public Safety serves as the point of contact in all buildings on campus.
- *Would faculty members be required to enforce the mask mandate in class?*
Signs are posted and all students will be reminded of the mask requirements. Faculty should remind students as needed.
- *How would the College perform deep cleaning of classrooms computers and equipment between classes?*
The Facilities department has been trained in COVID cleaning protocols and has an updated COVID cleaning schedule for each building. This includes hourly cleaning in restrooms, cleaning of classrooms and daily cleaning of office areas.

Finally, on a very positive note, this week Governor Hogan announced salary and bonuses for State employees. For BCCC personnel, it means a well-deserved \$1,000 bonus and a 2% wage increase to become effective in January 2022. Additional resources also may be announced.

Thank you all for your hard work and seeing us through the Fall semester. I greatly appreciate keeping BCCC "students first." Have a wonderful holiday celebration. See you in 2022!

Best Regards,

Debra L. McCurdy
President