



Thursday, October 14, 2021

Re: Chancellor`s Letter to PHSU Community

Dear Members of the PHSU Community:

I am reaching out to each of you to give some updates on university policies and to ask for your assistance in continuing to abide by procedures regarding campus operations while we continue to do our best to curb the COVID-19 pandemic together. Although significant progress has been made during the past months it does not mean that we should become complacent in our efforts.

We are still holding in person and hybrid classes and have taken the necessary steps to ensure a safe environment in our campus community and to continue with COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

All programs will continue to hold presential classes, practical exercises, labs and exams on campus. Currently over 98% of our student and employee populations are fully vaccinated. Those who have gone through the necessary procedures regarding an exemption (religious or health reasons) have agreed to established protocols regarding testing requirements (molecular COVID-19 testing) as well as other accommodations.

As a reminder, the following policies are in place for the Fall 2021 semester and will be in effect until further notice.

1) Students must comply with the established vaccination and testing policies.

Please refer to the following link where you can access the policy:

[PHSU COVID-19 Protocol and Procedures](#)

2) Employees and students presenting COVID-19 like symptoms or discovering exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must stay home and immediately contact the Human Resources Division (employees) or Student Success Office under the Student Affairs Division (students). Personnel at those Divisions will assess the situation and will provide specific instructions to follow. If needed, a protocol for contact tracing will be initiated by a designated liaison officer. In meritorious cases, students will not be penalized for time missed assignments and will be granted an official excuse from the Office of the Chancellor.

3) The following procedures are modified for travel. This policy can change at any time due to the circumstances and cases in Puerto Rico.

Domestic Travel

Fully vaccinated:

- Upon return from travel please monitor symptoms.
- No quarantine is required unless you have symptoms.
- It is recommended that you schedule a PCR test upon your return to Puerto Rico.
- Follow all guidelines, requirements, and local regulations from the Puerto Rico Department of Health.

Unvaccinated Individuals:

- Traveling is NOT recommended for unvaccinated individuals.
- If you travel, you must quarantine upon your return for a full seven (7) days.
- Schedule a PCR test once you have completed your mandatory quarantine.
- Return to work upon a negative PCR test.

International Travel:

Fully vaccinated:

- Return from travel and quarantine for 3-5 days.
- Monitor symptoms accordingly.
- Upon completing quarantine schedule a PCR test.
- Return to work upon a negative PCR test.

Unvaccinated Individuals:

- Traveling is NOT recommended for unvaccinated individuals.
- If you travel, you must quarantine upon your return for a full seven (7) days.
- Upon completing quarantine schedule a PCR test.
- Return to work upon a negative PCR test.

4) All visitors must provide proof of vaccination or negative PCR test to the security office

5) There will be in effect a mandatory use of safety masks on campus until further notice. We will closely monitor the situation for possible outbreaks during the upcoming weeks, but masks must be worn on campus. Importantly, security officers on campus have the authority to always enforce these policies. Faculty, students, and staff must continue to diligently wash hands and try to keep ample distance just as a precaution. **It is recommended that surgical or KN95 masks are used on campus as they are the most effective in stopping the spread of germs.**

6) All students, faculty and staff must vacate classrooms and other public areas for the cleaning crews to come and disinfect classrooms. We recommend to allow a 10 minutes break between classes for cleaning crews to remove trash and disinfect areas. We ask that classrooms are not used for unscheduled activities. Students and staff must not congregate in classrooms and hallways. Please, do not eat meals in classrooms or hallways in any of our campuses. Along these lines, there are specified areas where you can eat safely including the cafeteria area (Eastcampus) the Student Lounge, the Rotunda, and open areas (Main campus).

Please be conscious of social distancing and mask requirements. Security guards will be instructed to check classrooms and hallways and politely instruct staff and students to vacate classrooms when needed. Also, guards have the authority to instruct staff and students to fully comply with the mask requirements on campus.

7) The Library and Student Lounge will continue to operate under hours that are legally permissible under the current executive order. We ask that everyone abide by the posted regulations and hours for these facilities.

Thank you again and we must abide by the regulations currently in place to do our part in the prevention of spreading the COVID-19 virus.

Cordially,



Jose A. Torres-Ruiz, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Ponce Health Sciences University