



Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

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10/25/2021—COVID-19 UPDATE: POSTURING AND REPORTING

Dear all,

The situation with COVID-19 continues to evolve and we remain committed to “learning to learn” optimal ways we can keep you safe and secure while enabling pace and progression through the program. As with other pandemic policies we look for guidance from departments of health (DOH) and education (DOE) as well as our educational colleagues at large universities (e.g., University of Pittsburgh and Point Park University). Thus, similar to the University of Pittsburgh, the Institute will no longer be using the Operational Posture system moving forward.

The new COVID communication protocol will be a weekly update on Fridays to the campus population regarding the number of new cases, the positivity rate for all of those in the building, date/s positive case was reported, vaccination rates and any other useful information for contact tracing provided to the best of our knowledge. Obviously, due to HIPAA and FERPA stipulations we cannot divulge any specific information about any individual/s who have tested positive (this includes the class cohort). However, consistent with the University of Pittsburgh’s policy we can provide the data each week to track how we are doing as a campus community and guide further decisions.

As it was presented last week via email communications, it is likely that cases will continue in both vaccinated and unvaccinated, yet the new reporting protocol will provide all with information that may help with personal decisions, especially with regard to COVID testing. Once again, consistent with the large State universities, we recommend that all (vaccinated as well as unvaccinated) receive a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after the reporting of a positive COVID case on the PIMS campus. During the waiting period for testing (note: 3-5 days post exposure is the optimal time for testing to occur according to the DOH and CDC) it also recommended that masking, hand washing, social distancing and all other forms of mitigation should be practiced in all settings.

That said, for the week ending Friday, October 22, 2021, the following data is reported:

# Of New Cases Reported	Date/s of positive report provided	Positivity Rate (out of 125 people who are on ground—students, faculty, and staff)
1	Thursday, October 21, 2021	.01

Other info and analysis: Last week will serve as the baseline week for new case reporting and positivity rate, but this data is encouraging about the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community. Additionally, with about 113 students accessing the campus and a dozen faculty, admin, and staff, the percentage of these individuals who are fully vaccinated is 108 out of 125 or 86%. While this number is notable, breakthrough cases are still a concern so it is strongly recommended that mitigation procedures continue and those who can receive a booster consider doing so at your first opportunity. Finally, tracing shows the one case reported was not in the building since testing positive, however, the timeline may pre-date the reporting.

In closing, we appreciate your understanding of this ever-evolving situation as COVID-19 continues to bring us challenges, but we are committed to keeping everyone safe and healthy. This new reporting policy, which takes the place of the operational posturing should provide up to date information for all to make optimal decisions while helping administrators trace and track trends regarding the virus. Please stay connected as updates will be provided each week.

Sincerely

Dr. Barry T. Lease, Program Director/COO