



Office of the Provost

MSC 3445
New Mexico State University
P. O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
575-646-2594, fax: 575-646-6334
provost@nmsu.edu

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Faculty Members

FROM: Provost Carol Parker

Dear Faculty Colleagues –

We've completed just over a week in this new teaching environment, and I want to begin by thanking you for your hard work, flexibility and creativity. Some who are teaching in person are bringing forward great questions regarding how to handle situations that may arise in the classroom. I've asked the Rapid Response Team for further clarification on several points and would like to share the information that I received, and to provide some additional resources to help you navigate the semester.

First, as to the issue of students who aren't complying with the requirements to (1) stay home when ill, (2) wear a mask at all times, and/or (3) maintain appropriate distance: Start by being proactive in your class sections, and clearly state the university's expectations for compliance with the [Crimson Safety Commitment](#). Even if you have already talked with your class about COVID-19 protocols, regular reminders throughout the semester are a good way to reinforce those practices. Provide clear instructions about absences and how to keep up with class assignments if they must stay home due to illness, so they're not tempted to attend when they don't feel well.

When it comes to mask compliance and social distancing, we've created a convenient guide, [available online for download](#). In short, you should start by discreetly reminding any student without a mask of the policies, and request that they wear a mask. If they refuse, ask them to leave. If the non-compliant student refuses to leave, you may choose to dismiss class or call the NMSU Police department for assistance in de-escalating the situation and follow up with a referral to the Dean of Students.

If someone looks, sounds, or expresses that they are ill, tell them to go home until they feel better, and refer them to the Aggie Health & Wellness Center for medical evaluation. If they refuse to leave, as a last resort, call the NMSU Police Department at 575-646-3311 for assistance and follow up by making a [referral to the Dean of Students](#).

Several people have asked if a class needs to be dismissed and undergo quarantine if a student in that class tests positive or arrives showing symptoms of illness. The short answer is no – you do not need to stop the class or shut down the building. The CDC recommends quarantine only for people who have been in close contact with

somebody who has COVID-19. The CDC defines a “close contact” with an individual as spending at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of that person, regardless of whether either of them are wearing a mask. Even when a student is exhibiting symptoms, classrooms have been configured to minimize the risk to you and other students by removing the opportunity for close contact.

Classrooms are stocked with a supply of disinfecting wipes, and you can request a quick delivery of more by contacting the building monitor or emailing askfs@nmsu.edu, if supplies run low. It’s also a good idea to carry your own “Ready kit,” with wipes, an extra mask, and any other items you might need. Wiping down touch surfaces at the beginning of class is a habit you and all your students must establish.

Our Facilities & Services custodial team carefully cleans and disinfects your classroom every single day. Since you may not see them unless you’re on campus very early in the morning, they’ll be putting up signs with dates and signatures, so you can be confident that the enhanced cleaning has taken place.

If you learn that a student in your class has a positive COVID-19 test, the first course of action is to inform your department head and building monitor, who should contact Aggie Health & Wellness Center. This will activate the university’s [enhanced cleaning protocol](#) and begin the contact tracing process. This protocol usually does not require closing a building, and the decision to close a building, area, or classroom should be made by our experts at Aggie Health & Wellness and Facilities & Services, and should not be made by individual faculty members, department heads or building monitors. Our sanitizing mister system and other enhanced disinfection techniques can quickly make a classroom or building ready for use, creating a clean space you can feel comfortable re-entering.

In a time when we are all anxious about our health and safety, our best defense is to be well-informed about the steps to take in the event of an issue with compliance or cleaning. Reliable information is available at the [New Mexico Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Please also stay up to date with the information in our [NMSU Ready](#) plan. If you have questions that are not answered in this document, please send them to covid19@nmsu.edu.

We’re planning another online [faculty Q&A session](#) on Monday at 3 p.m., sponsored by me and Faculty Senate. You can [submit your questions](#) ahead of time and tune in to learn more about our ongoing planning for the semester.

Thank you for everything you do each day to create a welcoming learning environment for our students! This is hard work, and I know our students appreciate your work as much as I do.