

TO: Augusta Technical College Students

RE: Lifting Mandatory Mask Requirements on June 1, 2021

Dear Augusta Tech Students and Employees,

Following updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Governor Brian Kemp, **effective June 1, 2021, Augusta Technical College will lift our mandatory mask requirement for individuals that have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19.** The institution will not require proof of vaccinations, but we strongly recommend those who have not been vaccinated to get vaccinated soon. Here's a link to vaccination clinics: <https://dph.georgia.gov/locations/covid-vaccination-site>. While masks will no longer be required for those who are fully vaccinated, the CDC recommends continued use of face coverings or masks for those who are unvaccinated.

Moreover, those who chose to wear a mask (even if vaccinated) are encouraged to continue to do so. The college will also keep its practice of deep cleanings of facilities on Friday afternoons, while also keeping PPE, plexi-glass, and hand sanitizers in place as we do now. We will also continue to track positive cases indefinitely. The health and safety of our students, employees, and community partners remain our top priority.

I do want to applaud each of you for your efforts so far. Since March of 2020, the institution has had less than 121 positive total cases for employees and students combined! That's quite impressive and it's due to you being responsible members of our Cougar Community. I also want to give a special thanks to our facilities, grounds, and janitorial crews for their extra efforts in keeping us safe throughout the year. We could not have done so without them.

In closing, I do want you to stay vigilant with your personal practices as it relates to this virus. The pandemic is not over, and COVID-19 is still active. It is incumbent on each of us to be truthful about our health conditions, communicate if we are ill, and continue to practice good personal hygiene to suppress the spread of the virus. Collectively, we are all in this together, so please be a good steward of your personal health and let's keep Cougar Nation thriving moving forward.

As aforementioned, the college will continue to track COVID 19 cases. At this time, we do not anticipate a reversal in the lifting of our mandatory mask policy, but if local conditions worsen, or if we get different guidance from the CDC or the governor's office, the policy is subject to reversal.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Go Cougars!

Dr. Whirl