

Suffolk County Community College

College Brief

NO. 11 September 30, 2021

TO: The College Community

FROM: Dr. Edward Bonahue
 President

SUBJECT: Planning for Spring 2022

With most aspects of the fall semester opening now behind us, I would like to express my appreciation for the work of our college's Safe Start Task Force. Their efforts in developing our reopening plans have ensured that nearly all of our community—including nearly 10,000 students—could return to campus with confidence. We are still dealing with the SUNY COVID-19 vaccination mandate, but our progress has been excellent. As of yesterday, of the 9,619 students registered for any kind of class with an on-campus component, 9,120 have received at least one vaccine dose, with over 8,000 receiving the full dose. Only 290 students have no vaccine record and we are addressing this remainder on a case-by-case basis during the SUNY policy's grace period.

When the college initiated its planning for the fall, the Master Schedule provided students with a 50/50 split between online and on-campus class choices, in what everyone agreed would be a "transitional" semester. Statewide, many anticipated that both new and continuing students would primarily be looking forward to being on campus. By offering a combination of class modality options, SUNY Suffolk was able to successfully address and meet student preferences for both options. The late announcement of the SUNY vaccine mandate may also have had an effect, and by September, fall student enrollment settled at 65% online and 35% face-to-face.

Looking ahead to the spring, I consulted last week with FA president Dante Morelli, Guild president Sean Tvelia, various governance leaders, and many academic and student affairs staff to explore how we can best meet student needs in 2022. Although there are still unknowns going forward, we were agreed on the overarching goals of giving priority to on-campus instruction and encouraging continued student return to all our on-campus opportunities, while also preserving some flexibility for students who need remote access. Therefore, I requested development of a spring schedule designed to meet these goals, with a target of flipping student enrollment to 65% on campus and 35% online.

In an effort to provide everyone with the greatest lead time possible, I am taking this opportunity to inform all faculty that they should expect to teach on campus and hold on-campus office hours with the start of the 2022 calendar year.

Also, since July 2021, in line with our SUNY-approved reopening plan, non-faculty employees have been working on campus using a 75% staffing model, implemented through

weekly staggered schedules. In light of our students' needs as they return to campus, improving public health conditions, as well as the SUNY vaccination mandate, I am now informing all non-faculty employees to begin preparing to return to their work locations at 100% by the new year. Many individuals are already at that level, and I extend my appreciation for their commitment. Now all of us must make a similar transition. By the conclusion of the fall semester, each department will share more specific information with their staff, but planning for that eventuality must begin now.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that while conditions are improving, the pandemic is not over and our plans are still subject to change as new information, guidance and/or direction is received. However, we should all prepare for this next step with confidence. Please be assured that the college will continue to closely monitor the state's and the region's public health numbers related to COVID. Throughout the entire pandemic, the college has consistently experienced low positivity rates and no major outbreaks. In order to maintain this standard, we will still require everyone to practice social distancing, to wear a mask inside any college buildings and in any crowded outdoor settings, and to monitor their daily personal health—if you are sick or feel sick, stay home.

I strongly believe that our college community will receive a positive boost when we can again interact with one another face-to-face on campus. Every effort is being made to ensure that our staff remains healthy and that our office environments enable everyone to stay safe while at work.