February 25, 2022

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff of Virginia’s Community Colleges:

We are encouraged by indications we see, and evolving guidance from federal and state health officials, that the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 virus is receding in Virginia. As vaccination rates across the commonwealth increase and infection rates decrease, we believe the virus is transitioning from being a pandemic to being an endemic.

Just as we took steps in response to the virus’s outbreak, we must be willing to adapt to changing conditions and ensure that our policies aimed at protecting the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff are calibrated appropriately to current conditions, and balanced with other community needs and considerations.

Accordingly, I am suspending the mask mandate currently being observed by all students, faculty, staff, and visitors across every campus and facility of Virginia’s Community Colleges, effective Monday, March 14, 2022.

To be clear: the decision to wear a mask on campus will still be welcomed, just no longer required. I urge everyone across our campus communities to take the necessary steps to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask voluntarily; obtaining COVID-19 vaccination and booster shots; and testing and staying home when experiencing symptoms of illness.

Indications are that the virus poses a low risk to healthy people who are fully vaccinated and boosted. However, some people in your college community remain vulnerable to the virus and will take additional steps to protect themselves. Some will continue to be more comfortable wearing a mask. Such a decision should be met with consideration, kindness, and respect.

Our goal in responding to COVID-19 has been to impose as few restrictions as needed to protect the public health of our community colleges. That goal will guide our decision-making as we move forward too. Accordingly, should we encounter another wave of infections sweeping across Virginia, or the rise of a threatening new variant, I will consider reinstating this masking policy, or others, if needed.

Meanwhile, please know how grateful I am for your hard work, along with the patience and flexibility that you have displayed throughout our encounter with COVID-19. You have made it possible for us to continue our pursuit of the community college mission at a time when it is needed by so many. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of Virginia’s Community Colleges.

Sincerely,

Glenn DuBois

Glenn DuBois, Chancellor
Virginia Community College System