Dear Falcons,

We are excited to begin welcoming students back next week with the Jump Start early arrival program, and to seeing everyone else the week of August 30.

Given the current COVID-19 transmission rates due primarily to the delta variant, I am writing to inform you of some additional precautions we are taking to keep you safe. **Taking these steps now gives us the best chance of success as we continue to plan for a fall semester of in-person classes and other activity.**

**Face coverings:** Effective, **Sunday, Aug. 22,** UW-River Falls will be **requiring** face coverings in all indoor public spaces on campus property where physical distancing of six (6) feet is not possible, regardless of vaccination status. Please see our updated interim **COVID-19 policy document** for more details, including on exceptions and accommodations. This will be in effect until case numbers return to lower levels – and we will let you know as soon as it is safe to make that policy change.

**COVID-19 testing:** UWRF continues to offer free **COVID-19 testing** on campus in Hagestad Hall for the campus and greater community. Anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms is expected to be tested as soon as possible. In order to help identify and control outbreaks of COVID-19 on campus, starting **Tuesday, Sept. 7,** UWRF will also implement a **prevalence testing protocol for all non-vaccinated employees and students.** Every week, 10% of non-vaccinated students and 10% of non-vaccinated employees will be randomly selected and **required** to take a COVID-19 test during the obligation period.

- Those who are fully vaccinated need to upload their vaccination card through the **COVID-19 Portal** to be removed from this obligation.
- Those who are required to test weekly but fail to do so will be held accountable. Affected students and employees will receive a follow-up message with more details.

I know it is frustrating and worrying to see COVID-19 cases on the rise again. Based on data from other areas where the delta variant has emerged, we are expecting this trend to continue for some weeks until cases peak and then hopefully go back down. UW-River Falls will continue to consult with our public health experts and monitor conditions on campus and in the community.

While it might feel like we are back where we were a year ago, please note the most important difference from last fall: we now have highly effective vaccines that protect against serious illness and hospitalization. **Vaccination is the key to defeating COVID-19.** Remember to check out the [Protect the Nest](#) campaign and #VaxUpFalcons!

- Students and employees can sign up for on-campus vaccine clinics on Monday, Aug. 30, and Wednesday, Sept. 1, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Falcon’s Nest in the University Center. Make your appointment [here](#).

Thank you for taking these simple and important steps to protect yourself, your friends and family and our community. We’ll continue to keep you updated through campus emails and online at [Falcons Forward](#). Email [covid19@uwrf.edu](mailto:covid19@uwrf.edu) if questions.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Gallo