

From: [President Waded Cruzado](#)
Subject: Updates for Spring Semester 2021
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020 6:33:08 PM



Dear MSU Community,

I hope that you are enjoying a peaceful winter break (or making progress during MSU's Snowmester), while staying safe and healthy this holiday season.

Today, Montana's Commissioner of Higher Education distributed [guidance](#) to the state's campuses as we prepare to return for the 2021 spring semester, beginning January 11.

Following the guidance from the Commissioner of Higher Education and as previously announced, the majority of our classes at Montana State University this spring will be offered in-person, with blended and online formats being available as well. We know from feedback and from academic performance reports that our students strongly prefer face-to-face instruction and that they benefit from being on our campus, having access to the academic advising, co-curricular experiences and support services that only in-person learning can provide.

The precautions put in place for the fall semester will continue in the spring. Face masks will be required on campus; social distancing will be strictly observed. Members of our campus community should practice good hand hygiene and avoid large gatherings -- on campus or off campus. We will again distribute free Clean 'Cat Kits to help students, faculty and staff provide an extra level of sanitation to the areas they touch throughout the day. MSU has made the financial commitment to continue to offer symptomatic testing and contact tracing once federal CARES Act funds expire at the end of the present year. Importantly, MSU is already preparing for vaccine distribution, once supplies become available.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has provided the following additional recommendations for spring, and MSU is adopting them effective immediately:

Students are encouraged to complete a 10-day, precautionary self-quarantine immediately *before* returning to campus and to monitor their health daily. Students should only return to campus if they are symptom-free throughout that period. If symptoms appear, students should seek COVID-19 testing and delay their return to MSU. Should a student need to delay their return to campus due to COVID-19, our faculty and staff are asked to be

prepared to provide remote coursework and online support until those students can safely join us in person.

Additionally, students are encouraged to obtain a COVID-19 test *before* returning to campus, regardless of whether they have symptoms. If the test result is positive, students should delay their return, quarantining or isolating as directed by health care professionals.

MSU and the commissioner's office realize that asymptomatic testing and case management support capacity in our state are limited. The Montana University System will continue to work with its governmental partners on ways to expand Montana's capacity, and if that capacity can be increased, the commissioner's office will work with MSU and the state's other campuses to explore additional asymptomatic testing for students, especially before the start of the semester.

I can finish this message on a hopeful note, given the deployment of three different COVID-19 vaccines, at least one of which was distributed nationally earlier this week. I am also pleased to report that your university, Montana State, has been authorized to dispense the vaccines. Rest assured that, as soon as we receive specific information regarding timelines and availability, we will communicate such information expeditiously.

Brighter times are ahead of us, Bobcats, and I am wishing you a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

Waded Cruzado



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President, Montana State University

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