Happy New Year, and welcome back!

I am happy to confirm that UMN Crookston will be open with classes starting January 11, 2021, with a combination of in-person, hybrid, and online classes this spring. As was the case in the fall, each faculty member has the option of delivering their courses in-person, blended (partially in-person and partially online), remotely via Zoom, or online without any regularly scheduled class meetings. Currently, 59% of our courses will be fully in-person and another 20% will be blended.

As I share this news, I'm also asking you to make a bold New Year’s resolution. Our plan last fall worked well. We were able to open campus and deliver face-to-face classes while keeping our infection rate low. I believe we can do even better this spring. I am asking you to double down on the strategies that worked this fall and be aggressive with lying low before you return to campus.

Starting the semester with strong COVID-prevention strategies will serve as a bridge to the time when vaccinations help take pressure off healthcare workers and the most vulnerable in our community. After we turn this corner, we will have the opportunity to ease some requirements related to physical distancing. We’re not there yet, but with a bold and aggressive start to the year, we can get there.

The information below regarding how to prepare for your return to campus and COVID-19 testing options is similar to what I shared on December 22, 2020 with a few minor updates.

I encourage you to review the information carefully as you plan your return.

Lie Low Before You Go

Please continue to eliminate the potential of becoming infected by avoiding contact with persons outside your immediate household until you return to campus.

In addition we will continue with the four-part prevention strategy that worked for our campus this past fall:

- daily screening,
- physical distancing,
- facial coverings, and
- hygiene strategies including washing your hands.

Testing Options and Recommendations for All Faculty and Staff

UMN Crookston recommends that individuals follow science-based recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for when to get tested for COVID-19. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends individuals should get tested for COVID-19:

- If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19,
- If you have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or
- If you are part of a screening testing strategy such as student-athletes or students working in specified sectors such as healthcare, childcare, education, etc.
If you learn of a potential exposure to COVID-19, it's best to get tested at least five days after the last time you were close to the person with COVID-19. If you get tested too soon, the test may not be able to detect the virus.

If you become aware of a potential close contact shortly after the contact, the COVID-19 Test at Home program for those living in Minnesota may be your best option for getting tested. If you would prefer to visit a Community Testing Site, make an appointment. If the site nearest you has no available appointments on the day you're looking to get tested, either look at a later date or try finding a testing location a little farther away.

If you live outside of Minnesota, please check with your state’s health department for testing information or consult with your local healthcare provider.

**Before You Come to Campus**

As we did this fall, we are asking you to attest that you have followed the appropriate procedures by signing the attestation statement found here: [https://forms.gle/LkzxowCKADF67UwT8](https://forms.gle/LkzxowCKADF67UwT8)

If you answered “yes,” to any of these questions, we suggest you either seek testing (as outlined above) or stay at your current residence until you can answer "no" to all of the questions. When you can attest to all the statements above with "no" answers, please sign the form electronically and you will then be able to engage in on-campus classes and activities.

Thanks for your help in protecting our nest.

Sincerely;

Chancellor Mary