

# Wabash.

April 12, 2021

To: Wabash Community  
From: President Scott Feller and Dr. Ann Taylor  
Re: Community Update for April 12, 2021

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We give our heartfelt thanks to all who participated in the #BashCOVID vaccination clinic on Friday and Sunday. It was a labor-intensive event that owes its success to the 52 volunteers from our students, parents, staff, faculty, alumni, and community friends and to all the students, staff, and family members who were vaccinated. It was hard work but definitely worth it; we have 620 newly vaccinated members of our community.

While the first dose of the vaccination sequence is a huge step forward, we must continue the hard work of COVID-19 mitigation, both individually and as a community. The unfortunate truth is that at just three days from the initial dose, the protection from vaccination is indistinguishable from placebo. We must continue masking, distancing, avoiding crowds, and carefully monitoring our health as we will undoubtedly have infections within our community for the remainder of the semester.

Our surveillance testing continues to identify COVID on campus with a positivity rate of 0.7%. Several symptomatic cases were identified as well, which means that we must raise COVID Pass usage (currently at 87%) in the coming week. While Montgomery County metrics improved this week, Wabash metrics (positivity, app use, case dispersion, quarantine/isolation capacity) all degraded, bringing the campus score to the border between Yellow and Orange. We will provisionally remain under Yellow to begin the week, but we will return to more restrictive conditions for events and guests if campus metrics do not improve.

This phase of the pandemic has been described as a race between vaccines and variants. While last week vaccines shot out of the starting blocks of our campus race, the evidence is that variants have a big lead right now. CDC reports last week indicate that the majority of new infections are coming from B.1.1.7, the so-called British variant, and we assume the same is true on campus. This variant is associated with higher infectivity, which means it passes more easily among individuals. The only way to combat this, at least until immunity from vaccination kicks in two weeks after the second shot, is to execute the 3 W's and avoid the 3 C's at an even higher level. Unfortunately, the need to up our mitigation game is hitting when we are fatigued. Check yourself, and those around you, this week if you start to slip and remember that you are fighting a tougher competitor this week, one that has tired of losing to you and has learned a few new tricks.

With gratitude for you and all you bring to campus,

President Scott Feller  
Ann Taylor, Special Assistant to the President for COVID Planning and Response

