

AFUM UPDATE

<http://afum.info/>

1/22/2021

New Semester New Year New Beginning

Monday begins a new semester of our new year. With the new beginning we have continuing challenges; our first winter with COVID¹, more infected individuals, mutation into more transmittable forms, and uncertain vaccine availability.

- The two dose versions of the vaccine seem fully effective 6 weeks after the first dose and availability in February seems optimistic; we will not see a population of protected people until April at the earliest. This semester will be another difficult semester and we need to protect each other, physically and mentally. Consider getting a better quality mask (3 layer masks, with a polypropylene or similar filter, seem better than a single layer cotton mask: AFUM has asked UMS to consider providing better masks), be kind to yourself, our students and to each other.
- Due to the pandemic, AFUM & UMS agreed that student evaluation results for Spring 20, Fall 20 and Spring 21 will not automatically go into the file; faculty may choose to put them into the file. It should be obvious to all that it is not ok to ask for, or in any way to coerce anyone, to provide these results. Nor is it acceptable to use the lack of these evaluations in any pejorative manner. *If you have been coerced into providing your results please contact your campus AFUM leadership, your campus president, and make a complaint to HR.*
- AFUM is also in process of modifying the COVID testing MOU to allow for more frequent testing of faculty who are on campus (from one every 14 days to once a week). UMS will be using a new antigen test. While the test is good, it still yields false positives². All positive results will automatically be retested from the same vial. Such double testing will greatly reduce false positives². The enterprise of testing and caring for our community is truly daunting. My thanks in advance to all of those working so hard to bring all the pieces together.
- The news has been filled with stories about the statewide college of Engineering. The contract does not provide for a statewide college, generic joint programs, or joint appointment of faculty. The contract does provide for Cooperating Departments. AFUM will be providing a webinar to explain Cooperating Departments. A date is not yet set, expect early/mid-February.
- The AFUM Negotiating Team has been meeting over break and will begin meeting with UMS in mid-February to negotiate a successor contract.

Wishing everyone a safe and successful semester,

¹ In an effort to not be too pedantic, I did not differentiate between the virus (SARs-CoV-2) and the disease, COVID-19.

² The issue of false positives is important from a personal and public health perspective. Consider some devastating diseases with a prevalence of 1 in 100,000 and a test that is "99% accurate" that has 1% false positives. Testing the entire population generates 1000 false positive cases for every 1 true positive. I have ignored the confounding effects of false negatives. False positives often have a significant cost to the individual and society beyond the economics.

Jim