



MEMO

To: SJU Community

From: Peter Meehan, President and Vice Chancellor
Carol Ann MacGregor, Vice President Academic and Dean
Mike Gourlay, Executive Director, Finance and Administration

Date: December 1, 2021

Subject: December Update – Campus Response Team

December marks the nearing of the end of the term, but the beginning of the final stages of preparation for our full return to campus in January 2022. We will be moving away from the current hybrid working model and look forward to our employees continuing the process of a safe return to full in-person operations. Our planning will continue to be guided by public health guidelines and the operational needs of the university, with attention to new directives linked to the impact of the emergence of the Omicron variant.

Despite the recent increase in cases across the province, we are confident that we can prepare for a winter term that will allow for the return to in-person academic experiences. We are preparing for an increased number of students in our residences, including the Finn building, as students prepare for the return to in-person instruction as the modal form of course delivery. More information will be shared in mid-December regarding classroom protocols as we continue to work with our University of Waterloo partners. We look forward to expanding student in-person experiences, when safe to do so.

It is important that during this process we continue to remain vigilant and do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19. Our vaccination rates amongst the campus community are very high, but we must continue to follow the SJU safety protocols in place. Please continue to wear a mask, physically distance, wash hands often, and to follow public health instructions throughout the winter term. If you are feeling sick – stay home. Please connect with your manager/VPAD to discuss options available to you if you are sick. To help keep yourself safe and healthy consider getting the COVID-19 booster shot when available and this year's flu shot.

You may require support to mentally prepare for this changed environment when returning to campus. We encourage you to consider the following suggestions to support you with this transition:

- Plan and prepare – ensure you are up to date on SJU COVID-19 protocols by reviewing the information available on our website.
- Talk to your manager/Chair about any concerns you have about your return.
- Communicate with those you work with about your comfort level for meeting in person.
- Be kind to yourself – this is a big change from your routines over the last 20 months.
- Access good reading that offers other suggestions:
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/20/how-to-emotionally-prepare-for-a-return-to-the-office-.html>
 - <https://www.self.com/story/return-to-work-concerns>
- Reach out to our Director, Human Resources (michelle.watson@uwaterloo.ca)
- UW Occupational Health occupationalhealth@uwaterloo.ca

- Mental health resources: <https://uwaterloo.ca/occupational-health/mental-health-resources>

Please remember that as part of your employee benefit program the Homewood Health Employee and Family Assistance Program is also available (homeweb.ca | 1-800-663-1142), offering:

- Confidential counselling and coaching services, and immediate crisis support.
- Online access to resources on topics such as: lifestyle, health and wellness, financial coaching, legal advisory services, childcare, or eldercare support.

Flexibility is an important part of our planning process. Public health guidelines may change. We will respond accordingly. Our FAQ document will continue to be updated and uploaded to our COVID-19 Staff and Faculty page on our website, and follow-up memos will be distributed to ensure you are well informed of changes.

Thank you for your ongoing support with our planning. We value your feedback shared using our RT system and look forward to having further discussions at the [SJU Assembly at 1:00 p.m. this Friday, December 3rd](#).