



July 26, 2021

Dear Heidelberg Students:

We are only **four weeks** away from starting the fall semester! We hosted three more *New Student Orientation* sessions for 79 incoming first-years last week. Lots of good energy.

The Miller Hall renovation is going well and on schedule. The inside is essentially gutted. No major issues to date.

My wife, Susan, and I attended the Crystal Bowersox concert at the *East Green Frost-Kalnow Amphitheatre* on Saturday night. Good music, beautiful setting, nice breeze, and a HUGE crowd! The East Green and National Corner are fantastic gathering places just one block from our campus ... check it out when you return!

In the face of the virulent COVID Delta variant that is attacking the entire country now, we strongly encourage all students and all employees to get fully vaccinated this summer, including individuals who had COVID previously. COVID positivity rates, hospitalizations, and deaths are rising everywhere among mainly unvaccinated individuals. With the rate of U.S. vaccinations stalling, that becomes everyone's risk.

You can use this link to find the most convenient COVID vaccination site for you: go to gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov in Ohio, for a list of vaccination sites in the area.

The U.S. COVID-19 vaccination rate is now 56.8% with at least one dose and 49.1% fully vaccinated. The Ohio vaccination rate is 48.9% one dose and 45.7% fully vaccinated. Seneca County is only 40.7% one dose and 38.7% fully vaccinated. The 7-day running positivity rate is now 5.8% in the U.S., 3.6% in Ohio, and 0.9% in Seneca County.

We can minimize this health threat against our campus community if we vaccinate.

We solicited voluntary confidential vaccination rate information from all students and all employees again last week and our rates are rising:

- > All new/returning students = **65.8%**
- > All employees = **67.5%**

These higher rates are more encouraging but far from giving our campus community COVID herd immunity at **75%** (middle of the CDC 70-80% range). Per the NCAA guidelines, our athletics teams need to reach an **85%** vaccination rate to make weekly team COVID testing unnecessary.

We are following CDC, ODH, and NCAA guidelines, while working closely with our local county health director, to update our COVID-19 policies, protocols, and practices for reopening the campus safely and successfully next month. We will communicate this information by the end of this week.

Pending Heidelberg reaching herd immunity, everyone should assume that some masking, distancing, and testing will resume on our campus upon return.

We are looking forward to FDA approval of the EUA COVID vaccinations to give everyone more confidence and trust in our country's scientific fight against this deadly pandemic.

Respectfully,

Rob Huntington
President