

COVID-19
**Spring 2022 Safe
Operating Protocols**



December 2021

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COVID-19 Fall 2021 Semester Safe Operating Protocols

This plan outlines the approved protocols for Western Nebraska Community College for the Fall 2021 semester, and applies to credit and non-credit classes at all campus locations. The plan is designed to ensure academic and service excellence and safety for students, faculty, staff, and community members as we continue to minimize the risk of exposure to the Coronavirus. Items outlined in this plan are subject to change based on updated recommendations or guidelines from the following:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html#section3>

Panhandle Public Health District (PPHD)

<http://www.pphd.org/>

University of Nebraska Medical Center

<https://www.unmc.edu/healthsecurity/documents/Higher-Education-Pandemic-Recovery-Guide-Step-I-III-5-12-2020-v1.35.pdf>

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

OpenSmartEDU.org

<https://www.opensmartedu.org/>

Disaster Resilient Universities (DRU) Network

<https://safety.uoregon.edu/disaster-resilient-universities-network>

Health & Safety

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. It is the virus responsible for the current global pandemic and is a highly contagious and potentially lethal virus. Its spread continues in many areas of the world and the United States, including Nebraska.

WNCC continues to closely monitor COVID-19 and is engaged in numerous efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the pandemic. Efforts include the implementation of mask-wearing protocols, social distancing measures, increased cleaning, and other recommended mitigation strategies. Despite the College's best efforts, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of positive cases or an outbreak on our campuses. We cannot guarantee that people present at college locations will not be exposed to and become infected with COVID-19. The risk of exposure and possible infection is real and present in any community environment where large numbers of people are regularly interacting, particularly when they do not adhere to the established protocol that includes wearing masks when in public and frequent hand washing.

The College continues to follow the guidance of the CDC, PPHD, and local medical experts. While the College will strive to reduce the risk and mitigate the effects of this virus, we need for every member of our community to cooperate with these ongoing efforts.

WNCC employees and students should understand that this pandemic is a fluid situation with circumstances ever-changing, and the protocols within this document are subject to change at any time. WNCC's COVID-19 Response Team will continue to assess the contents of this plan throughout the fall semester.

Communication Methods

WNCC has identified multiple modes of communicating COVID-19 updates, so please pay attention to the following sources for information:

- WNCC email
- WNCC RAVE alert
- [WNCC.edu COVID-19 information page](#)
- WNCC social media
- Local media sources

#HealthyAtWNCC

- WNCC continues to utilize physical barriers (plexiglass, or “sneeze guards”) with high levels of traffic and contact
- Appropriate social distances are marked on floors in high traffic areas.
- WNCC mask covering guidelines and COVID-19 safety informational posters have been placed throughout all buildings.
- WNCC still has access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand hygiene products, and cleaning materials to support the college population for this semester as available. WNCC employees should reach out to Administrative Services for those supplies.

Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccinations are the leading prevention strategy to protect individuals, slow the spread, and end the COVID-19 pandemic. Western Nebraska Community College strongly encourages that all faculty, staff, and students, for whom it is medically safe to do so, become fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Current COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States are [safe and effective](#), widely accessible in the U.S., and available at no cost to all people living in the U.S. Learn more about the [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#).*

While COVID-19 vaccination is not mandatory for WNCC employees at this time, Human Resources continues to monitor official rulings on President Biden’s plan for the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to develop a rule that will require all employers with 100 or more employees to ensure their workforce is fully vaccinated or require any workers who remain unvaccinated to produce a negative test result on a weekly basis before coming to work. Updates on the official ruling of this plan will be communicated to employees as necessary.

Before Coming to Campus

As recommended by PPHD, employees and students should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms related to COVID-19 throughout the semester, and should NOT come to campus if sick or have had exposure to an individual testing positive for COVID-19.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- *Fever or chills*
- *Cough*
- *Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- *Fatigue*
- *Muscle or body aches*
- *Headache*
- *New loss of taste or smell*
- *Sore throat*
- *Congestion or runny nose*
- *Nausea or vomiting*
- *Diarrhea*

Rave Guardian App

To assist employees and students in pre-screening themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to campus, download the mobile app **RAVE Guardian**, designed by RAVE, WNCC’s emergency notification service provider. The app can be found in the Google Play and Apple stores. Once downloaded, **daily wellness checks** will be sent to help screen for COVID-19 related symptoms.

Employees and students should also reference page 6 “Public Health Recommendations for the Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill Students and Staff for COVID-19 in Schools” when pre-screening themselves before determining if it is safe to report to campus for the day.

COVID-19 Reporting

Employees that are sick or exhibiting symptoms should report this to their supervisor immediately from home, and in conjunction with their supervisor, implement contingency plans for the department and position.

Students that are sick or exhibiting symptoms should report this to their instructors immediately from home, and in conjunction with their instructor(s), implement plans to complete coursework.

COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form

<https://www.wncc.edu/about-wncc/campus-safety/covid-19-self-reporting-form>.

In addition to reporting to your supervisor or your instructor(s) as mentioned in the previous paragraph, WNCC has implemented a self-reporting form. Employees and students who have met the following conditions are asked to report this information to WNCC by completing the online form.

- You have been excluded from campus because of symptoms
 - You have tested positive for COVID-19
 - You have been ordered to quarantine by a public health authority
 - You have had close contact with another person who tested positive for COVID-19
 - You have recovered from COVID-19
- The form should be filled out in its entirety, and should be filled out each time your case progresses. For example, from a quarantine, to testing positive, to recovering from COVID-19. In this example, the report would be filled out three (3) times.
 - Documentation of quarantines, isolations, positive test results, and recoveries (if available), should be emailed to **covid19reporting@wncc.edu**.
 - Employees and students are required to fill out the recovery form before returning to campus, no exceptions.
 - Questions or concerns about reporting any of this information should be emailed to **covid19reporting@wncc.edu** and WNCC will respond as soon as possible.

WNCC continues to rely on local public health entities to work with employees and students to conduct contact tracing for all positive cases. Cooperation by employees and students is highly encouraged.

Contact Tracing Definitions:

- **Close contact** – a person that is less than six feet for 15 minutes or more with a person that is positive for COVID-19. People considered as a close contact during contact tracing will be ordered by public health officials to self-quarantine for 14 days and to get tested for COVID-19 if they begin experiencing symptoms.
- **Contact of a contact** – a person that is a contact of a close contact (outlined above). People considered a contact of a contact are not required to self-quarantine but should continue all the important precautions of staying six feet away from others, wearing a mask, monitoring for symptoms, and frequent handwashing or sanitizing.
- **Quarantine** – confirmed as a close contact and must stay home and monitor for symptoms for 14 days since the last exposure to prevent the spread of the virus. If symptoms appear, get tested.
- **Isolate** – confirmed with COVID-19 and must stay home and away from others for at least 10 days from when symptoms first appeared, at least three full days with no fever, and all other symptoms have improved.

Public Health Recommendations for the Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill People

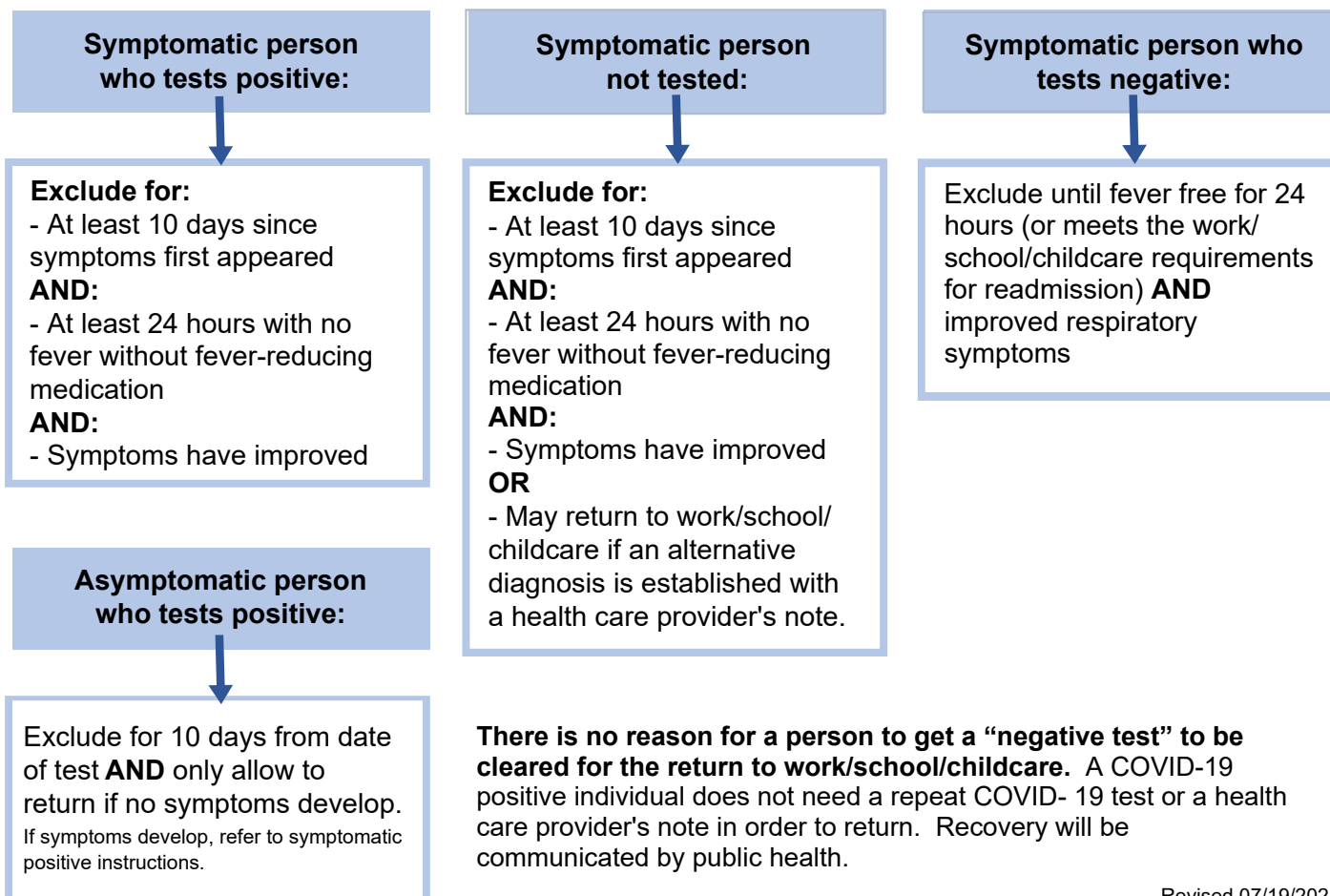
The following symptom screening criteria for ill people is based on the most current research. Because people with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness – the following criteria has been developed to assist in identifying possible COVID-19 cases.

People with two of the following: a fever of 100.4 or above, chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea or fatigue
OR:
 At least one of the following: sudden onset of cough, sudden onset of shortness of breath or sudden loss of taste or smell
OR:
 Has at least one symptom and answers yes to: Have you been around anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19 or in isolation?

- If at home:**
- Self-Isolate until results are received
 - Get Tested for COVID-19
- If at school/work/childcare**
- Go home
 - Self-Isolate until results are received
 - Get Tested for COVID-19

<http://www.pphd.org/COVID-19.html>

Re-Admittance to Work/School/Childcare



Revised 07/19/2021

For Employees

- The WNCC Human Resources department will be as flexible as possible while maintaining a consistent leave administration process for employees.
- If an employee will be absent for three (or more) days, please contact Jenny Keener in Human Resources for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) paperwork.
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired on **September 30, 2021**.
- In March 2020, WNCC Human Resources created a new leave code (EMER) due to up-rise of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired on September 30, 2021. Employees will no longer be able to utilize EMER paid leave due to COVID-19. If you have questions regarding COVID-19-related sick leave, contact Human Resources for questions.
- Since the expiration of the State of Emergency regarding this current pandemic, local health departments will no longer issue quarantine orders to persons exposed to COVID-19. In response to this, WNCC employees and students in contact with confirmed COVID-19 positive or symptomatic individuals should continue to self-report to the college and may be required to quarantine and be cleared by the college before returning to on-campus activities.
- Please review your available leave balances for sick, personal and vacation leave hours to accommodate any future time off.
- If you have any questions regarding your leave balances, please contact Jenny Keener in HR.

COVID-19 Testing

For information regarding the availability of COVID-19 testing in the Nebraska Panhandle, please visit PPHD.org.

WNCC Face Covering Protocol

Effective Friday, October 29, 2021 at 8:00 a.m., face coverings will only be required in classrooms on all campuses. Applied Technology lab courses will be excluded for safety reasons.

Face coverings will be strongly recommended in all college buildings, especially for those unvaccinated, unless they are alone in a private or enclosed space on campus.

Utilizing face coverings in meeting spaces will be at the discretion of the meeting organizer, and organizers must provide a Zoom meeting option for those who wish to participate virtually.

Beginning on October 13, 2021, department/program directors, event hosts, and faculty will have the option of mandating face coverings in their departments, programs, and classes. Those same individuals should notify their employees/students in advance of changes and they will be primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with that same mandate. Individuals can continue to wear face coverings if they choose in non-required spaces, and we ask that everyone be respectful of each other's personal decisions.

Acceptable Types and Use of Face Coverings

WNCC defines acceptable face coverings as:

- A reusable cloth mask, disposable mask, or face shield.
- Face shields should only be used in conjunction with an acceptable face covering.
- Regardless of type used, the mask should not be designed with an exhalation valve.
- All face coverings must extend from the bridge of the nose to below the chin, at minimum.

Requests for Accommodations

- Employees should continue to work directly with Human Resources to request reasonable accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees can begin the accommodation process by first completing a Employee Request for Accommodation form found on the WNCC Human Resource portal page.
- Students should continue to work with the Executive Dean of Students and Disability Services Officer to request reasonable accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Should there be concerns regarding not having a personal supply of masks, employees should contact Human Resources, and students should contact the Office of Student Life.

Face Covering Compliance

Employees who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering in a classroom, personal office, or at a specific meeting or event, will be asked to vacate that space and make alternative arrangements for engaging with that College employee or event. The employee's immediate supervisor or Human Resources should be notified if employees refuse to comply or make the requested alternative arrangements. Disciplinary action may be taken if this requirement is not followed.

Students who fail to comply with the requirement to wear a face covering in a classroom, personal office, or at a specific meeting or event, will be asked to vacate that space and make alternative arrangements for engaging with that class or event. Students who refuse to comply or make alternative arrangements will be referred to the Dean of Students office. Disciplinary action may be taken if this requirement is not followed.

Campus Physical Distancing & Hygiene Practices

Please follow these practices for the safety of all while at WNCC:

- Refrain from physical contact with others when possible (greeting, shaking hands, etc.)
- Follow all floor physical distancing stickers while waiting in line (where applicable).
- Utilize hand hygiene after entering the building by either: washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or utilizing a hand sanitizing product with at least 60% alcohol.
- Sanitize items between use that are shared between persons.
- Use sneeze/cough etiquette even when wearing a face covering.
- Utilize hand hygiene after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, etc.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth without properly sanitized hands.
- Reusable cloth face coverings should be laundered after each day.

Cleaning / Infection Control Protocols

Beginning in the fall 2021 semester, FBG services will begin proactively treating classrooms, common spaces, and highly touched surfaces at all locations with My-Shield. This product is an EPA List N approved non-toxic disinfectant that kills 99.99% of coronaviruses and germs on contact, and forms an antimicrobial barrier which provides protection for up to 28 days. This product will continue to be applied by FBG every three weeks throughout the fall 2021 semester.

Routine Cleaning

FBG Services will continue to clean routinely on a daily/nightly basis throughout all WNCC locations utilizing products and practices that are consistent with CDC and PPHD guidelines.

Routine cleaning concerns and requests can continue to be made via the WNCC Requests system in the WNCC Portal by selecting "FBG Custodial Services."

There are times, however, where it is more practical for staff to clean and disinfect spaces between uses, and employees and students should continue to utilize cleaning supplies given by WNCC to disinfect their work areas,

classrooms, and personal spaces throughout the day.

Employees can replenish cleaning supplies by contacting Administrative Services. Be sure to check the label of the cleaning product for disinfection procedures to ensure proper disinfection occurs when cleaning.

Teaching and Learning Environment

Lecture Courses

- In accordance with WNCC face covering protocols, faculty and students will both be required to wear face coverings for the entirety of the class.
- Hand hygiene and sanitation materials should be made available to the students before class.
- Faculty should be as flexible as possible while maintaining a consistent leave administration process for students in the classroom.
- Faculty will have the flexibility to conduct class times outdoors when feasible.
- Should a student begin to exhibit symptoms related to COVID-19 in the learning environment, faculty members should respectfully excuse the student from class.

Lab Courses

- WNCC understands there are instances when appropriate physical distancing cannot be maintained, but an awareness of close contact should be maintained.
- During lab courses when students and faculty are working together in close proximity, faculty should cohort small groups of students together as much as possible for as long as possible to help further reduce the risk of virus transmission.
- Students can participate in internships and clinicals during the Fall 2021 semester.

Employee / Business Travel

All employees will continue to reserve vehicles ahead of time through Administrative Services on the Scottsbluff Campus, and with designated individuals on Alliance and Sidney campuses. Supervisor consideration and approval is required before any travel outside of the WNCC service area. The Travel Request Authorization form, located on the WNCC Portal, must also be completed and approved before the vehicle is authorized for use.

More than one employee will be allowed to use the same vehicle for travel as long as the following measures are utilized during travel:

- If more than one person is traveling, face coverings are strongly recommended for all vehicle occupants. Seatbelts must always be worn!
- The vehicle's ventilation system should not be set to recirculation mode, but to allow fresh air into the vehicle for the duration of travel. Fresh air can also be introduced into the vehicle by opening windows frequently, or for the duration of travel.
- Employees who utilize WNCC vehicles for travel will be given supplies at checkout to sanitize the vehicle after use.
- Employees are required to sanitize the vehicle before checking the vehicle back in.

Student Transport (COVID-19)

WNCC has a process for transporting students to and from campus during this pandemic. See below.

- Employees who request a vehicle for student transport will be given a WNCC SUV for transport. All vehicles will be stocked with appropriate PPE for transport (masks, hand sanitizer, facial tissues, etc.)
- Both the employee and student should use proper hand hygiene before entering the vehicle.
- The vehicle's ventilation system should not be set to recirculation mode, but to allow fresh air into the vehicle for the duration of travel. Fresh air can also be introduced into the vehicle by opening windows frequently, or for

the duration of travel.

- Employees should transport no more than two (2) students at one time. Students should be seated as follows to allow for social distancing as much as possible:
 - » One student in the second-row passenger side
 - » One student in the third-row drivers side seat
 - » The student's luggage and belongings should sit next to them in their seating row. Do not combine all luggage in the cargo space.
- All WNCC transport vehicles will be sanitized between use by FBG before it is authorized to be used again.
- If more than six students require transport at approximately the same time, arrangements should be made with Administrative Services to schedule transport via bus/shuttle.

Travel Requiring Charter Bus / Shuttle

- All travel arrangements that require the WNCC charter bus or shuttle will continue to be scheduled through the WNCC Information Coordinator.
- It is at the discretion of the travel organizer to require face coverings during travel on buses. WNCC strongly encourages face covering usage by all occupants of the buses. Bus/shuttle drivers should refrain from physical contact with travelers and their belongings during the trip.
- The event coordinator will be responsible for maintaining physical distancing during travel and for disinfection of the vehicles during and after use.
- Should any person traveling become ill, or begin to exhibit symptoms of illness during travel, the event coordinator should be responsible for obtaining assistance from their department to activate the Fall 2021 semester student transport process. Persons who become ill during travel should not continue to travel with the rest of the group to further ensure transmission of the virus is limited or non-existent.

Residence Life

Health and Safety Responsibilities

Residence Life will be returning to normal operations. Mitigation measures that will continue to be in effect are listed below.

- Residential students are required to comply with health and safety laws, orders, ordinances, regulations and health and safety guidance adopted by WNCC or WNCC Residence Life as it relates to public health crises, including COVID-19.
- Residential students who are exhibiting symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 should follow COVID-19 protocols and remove themselves from classes and activities in order to minimize transmission.
- Adherence to health and safety requirements applies to all residents, staff, and visitors.

Quarantining/Isolation/Separation

- WNCC Residence Life has designated appropriate housing space for self-quarantine or self-isolation of students living on campus as not all residential rooms or halls are appropriate for self-quarantine or self-isolation.
- In those situations where a resident is required to self-quarantine or self-isolate, they may not be permitted to continue residing in their assigned residential space for the quarantine or isolation period and may be provided alternative housing arrangements in the designated housing space as needed.
- At any time, WNCC may request or require a resident to leave college housing when that resident's continued presence in the housing community poses a health or safety risk for community members.

Distancing and De-Densifying Efforts

Residential students are required to comply with any de-densifying efforts needed on campus due to COVID-19 or other public health emergency.

Consolidation

Residential students are required to comply with any consolidation efforts needed on campus due to COVID-19 or other public health emergency, including, but not limited to, the relocation of all or some residential students to alternative housing in order to better use our staff/ building resources.

Dining

- Dining Services to go options are available and encouraged for all students.
- Dining Services will provide meal deliveries to residents who are required to self-quarantine or self-isolate in Conestoga or Pioneer residence halls.

Cleaning

- Residence Life will educate and inform residential students on appropriate cleaning protocols within their assigned spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within residence halls.
- Residence Life will continue to implement and modify its cleaning protocols to address COVID-19 or other public health emergency in the interest of minimizing the spread of disease.
- Sanitation stations will be provided in all residential environments, equipped with hand sanitizer and alcohol wipes.
- Face coverings and alcohol wipes will be given to every student when they check in.

Visitation

- Persons visiting the Residence Life areas should not visit if they are ill or exhibiting symptoms of illness. Visitors will be required to comply with all protocols relevant to visitation within this plan.
- Residents visiting other students in college housing are required to follow all college housing check-in and visitation procedures.

Athletics

While participating in athletic functions, WNCC student athletes and athletics staff will be governed by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) requirements regarding COVID-19 mitigation and face coverings. WNCC student athletes are encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19. WNCC's Cougar Palace (gym) will continue to be open to spectators for athletic events at 100% normal occupancy. It is strongly recommended that spectators, especially those unvaccinated, wear masks, maintain appropriate physical distancing when possible, and utilize good hand hygiene when at indoor athletic events.

For more information on the NJCAA's requirements visit <https://www.njcaa.org>.

Resources

WNCC COVID-19 Web Page

Visit <https://www.wncc.edu/about-wncc/campus-safety/covid-19> to view all information regarding COVID-19 resources at WNCC.

Visitors

All community members, contractors, and vendors are subject to follow the following procedures within the Fall 2021 SOP:

- Before Coming to Campus
- WNCC Face Covering Protocol
- Campus Physical Distancing & Hygiene Practices
- Cleaning / Infection Control Practices
- Residence Life

COVID-19 Concerns or Questions?

Please report **COVID-19** concerns or protocol violations by emailing covid19@wncc.edu. WNCC will follow up on **ALL** concerns or violations reported.