



# EDWARD WATERS UNIVERSITY.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT | A. ZACHARY FAISON, JR., J.D.

December 31, 2021

Dear Edward Waters University Community:

I hope that each of you are safely celebrating the holidays and getting some needed time to enjoy the winter break after the fall semester. In recent days, communities across the nation have been besieged with significant increases in COVID-19 cases because of the spread of the omicron variant. The university has been monitoring the latest data and consulting with local public health agencies and monitoring CDC reports to understand the trajectory of the virus. I'm pleased to report that nearly 100% of our Edward Waters University (EWU) faculty and staff members have been vaccinated. In addition, our student leadership continues to strongly encourage their peers to consider receiving a COVID-19 vaccine given that vaccinations are universally regarded as the best protection against serious illness and hospitalization.

Relatedly, we have been closely monitoring the quickly evolving status of the COVID-19 omicron variant. Over recent weeks, the virus has spread rapidly with record-high infections in Florida, the United States, and abroad. Relatedly, at the end of the Fall semester earlier this month we saw other colleges and universities experiencing a significant spread of the omicron variant of the virus on their campuses. As a result, we have been taking focused heed to warnings coming from state and federal health agencies of the potential continued spread of the virus expected in January and beyond.

To slow the spread within our own community, and in anticipation of potential increased requirements coming from local health agencies, we have established a framework of specific operational adjustments for impeding the onset and potential growth in COVID-19 cases in the EWU community. Our goal is to limit the spread of the new variant and minimize disruption to the academic year. Your cooperation during the fall semester allowed us to significantly mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our EWU community and your committed collaborative efforts will allow us to continue to keep all constituents of our university community safe and well.

Accordingly, please note that the **protocols shared below are subject to change as we continuously monitor developments related to the COVID-19 virus** and its attendant variants pursuant to direction from local and national health agencies and organizations. As such, when returning to campus, either immediately following the Winter Break or for the start of Spring semester, **the following processes and protocols will be in place:**

- EWU will resume normal business operations for all employees as planned **on January 12, 2022.**
- **Classes will begin as scheduled on January 18, 2022; however, to begin the semester all instruction will take place online via a virtual remote, real-time format through February 28, 2022.** We are hopeful that classes will transition back to in-person learning **on March 1, 2022, should conditions permit.**
- Student residence halls **will remain open as planned to begin the Spring 2022 semester.** While residential students are not required to change their move-in plans and may return to campus throughout the remote period, students may elect of their own choice to delay their return to campus, if they are able to do so, to help reduce on-campus density during the omicron variant surge.

- **Students are required to complete the mandatory student check-in process** for the Spring 2022 semester. Student check-in will be **conducted via an exclusively virtual format** and will take place on the original dates as planned on **January 12<sup>th</sup> (New Students); January 13<sup>th</sup> (Returning Students Last Name Beginning in A-L); and January 14<sup>th</sup> (Returning Students Last Name Beginning in M-Z)**.
- EWU will continue to **require the campus mask mandate for all students, faculty, and staff** regardless of vaccination status.
- We **strongly recommend all students, faculty and staff get a COVID-19 test** prior to returning to campus, regardless of vaccination status.

In addition, please note that the official platform for all university communications remains your university e-mail, the university website, and university social media outlets. As such, you **should expect to receive additional information with further attendant and more specific details regarding forthcoming operational adjustments impacting students in the coming days from university leadership who provide oversight of the Divisions of Academic Affairs; Enrollment Management; Student Success and Engagement; Athletics; Finance, Administration and Business Innovation; and/or the Office of Human Resources for university employees**. Also, please be reminded that general information along with contact information to resolve COVID-19 operations related questions and to receive assistance will also soon be updated and provided via the university's COVID-19 Response Center webpage on the university website at [www.ewc.edu/covid](http://www.ewc.edu/covid).

Finally, as President I am keenly cognizant that beginning semester classes remotely presents another in a seemingly unending myriad of inconvenient challenges that have been wrought by this calamitous malady—particularly for students and families who have already made travel arrangements, faculty who have planned in-person coursework, and staff who have made countless adjustments to their protocols throughout the past two years. However, I urge you to remain flexible and adaptable during this latest surge as we continue our important work—learning, teaching, creating, and discovering—in the face of this ever-changing pandemic.

With all that we have collectively faced since February 2020, we know that we can effectively teach and learn remotely at Edward Waters University. Towards that end, we also know how especially meaningful and positively impactful the on-campus experience is at our institution. Subsequently, that is why we are making this decision now in the interest towards proactively protecting the health, safety, and wellness of our community—so that we can hopefully carry out the rest of the spring semester with a fully in-person experience on our historic and wonderfully evolving university campus.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation, commitment, and continuing efforts towards achieving even greater success at Florida's '*Destination Institution of Emerging Eminence*' in the coming new year.

Yours with Tiger Pride,



Dr. A. Zachary Faison, Jr.  
President & CEO