

Minot State Community,

As you know, one of the most discussed issues as we continue preparations to welcome students back to campus this fall is the issue of Masks/Face Coverings. We have discussed this extensively the past couple weeks in President's Staff, and below you will find Minot State's policy effective Monday, August 17 (please know, with limited traffic still on campus this summer, we will continue with our current policy until that time; current policy as stated in my campus email on June 4: "It is absolutely paramount that every one of us respect the rights, privacy, and expectations of our fellow employees, and a key way of doing this is ensuring we adhere to the 6-foot physical distancing guideline. **If you are working near another employee(s) and cannot maintain this distance, all parties involved must wear a mask.**")

Regarding the plan below, I want to thank both the Faculty and Staff Senates for their input and feedback on this issue, as well as a number of you who took time to write me or one of the other members of President's Staff and share your thoughts. Leadership by the SBHE during its Board meeting last week establishing some universal system-wide guidance is also appreciated.

This is yet another step in our "Smart Restart" plan for the MSU campus to effectively and safely prepare to educate our students this fall.

Thanks,

Steve

**Steven W. Shirley, PhD**

**President**

**Minot State University**

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**Go Beavers!**

## **Masks/Face Coverings**

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to stress the most important ways to protect ourselves and others include washing hands often, avoiding close contact with others (physical distancing), cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, covering coughs and sneezes, and wearing a mask/face cover when around others. Specifically, the CDC recommends everyone should wear a face covering in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when social distancing is difficult to maintain. The COVID-19 virus spreads from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and this spreading includes by people who are asymptomatic (not showing symptoms). To that end, the wearing of masks to cover one's face and mouth regardless of symptoms is incredibly important to helping prevent the spread of COVID-19 at Minot State University.

During his July 22, 2020 COVID press conference, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum stressed the importance of wearing masks in public to assist in ND's COVID-19 battle, and the following day on July 23 the ND State Board of Higher Education (the governing body for the 11 campuses of the ND University System) unanimously approved a resolution supporting masks and strongly encouraging every campus to implement policies or procedures requiring the use of face coverings in appropriate situations by all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

**Therefore, beginning on Monday, August 17, 2020 on the Minot State campus:**

Face coverings must be worn by students, faculty, staff, and visitors when:

- a. In a classroom or other instructional space, or when attending an event held indoors;
- b. In an indoor common space (lounges, hallways, elevators, study areas, bathrooms, the Library, etc.);
- c. Interacting with others;
- d. In the cafeteria, except when eating or drinking;
- e. Riding in a vehicle with one or more additional persons on university-sponsored business/activity;

Face coverings need not be worn when:

- a. Outdoors, if an appropriate distance from others is maintained, typically six feet;
- b. Alone (or with a roommate) in a residence hall room, university apartment, campus office, or workspace;
- c. Exercising in the Wellness Center, swimming in the MSU pool, or practicing/competing in intercollegiate athletics;
- d. Playing a musical instrument such as brass, woodwind, etc., or engaging in other academic-related approved exceptions;
- e. Participating in university-related programs or events granted an exception by the MSU President.

Some individuals cannot wear masks or face coverings for medical reasons. In these instances, students should contact [Access Services](#) with appropriate documentation; staff should contact Brent Winiger, Vice-President for Administration and Finance; and faculty should contact Dr. Laurie Geller, Vice-President for Academic Affairs to request accommodations.

Two reusable masks will be provided to each student in a welcome bag, and masks are also being provided to faculty and staff. All members of the MSU campus are additionally encouraged to bring masks of their own choosing for comfortability and to ensure they have an appropriate supply as masks need to be washed daily.

If you forget your mask, check with your respective department or an office in an academic building to access a disposable mask for the day. More information about face coverings is [available from the CDC](#).

If an individual chooses not to wear a face covering in an area where it is required, please follow these steps:

1. Inform the individual of the face-covering policy. Explain how face coverings protect others by reducing the possibility of infection, and ask the individual to comply with the policy. If the person refuses to comply, ask them to leave the space. If they won't comply or leave, MSU Security can be contacted if necessary at 701-500-2423.
  
2. If the individual violates the face-covering policy a second time, ask the individual to comply with the policy. If the individual refuses to comply, leave the space and report the individual to [brent.winiger@minotstateu.edu](mailto:brent.winiger@minotstateu.edu) (for staff), [laurie.geller@minotstateu.edu](mailto:laurie.geller@minotstateu.edu) (for faculty) or [kevin.harmon@minotstateu.edu](mailto:kevin.harmon@minotstateu.edu) (for students).