



COLLEGE OF  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

September 23, 2021

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators,

Greetings and blessings as we enter the season of Autumn. I am writing with a brief update on the status of the College community's COVID-19 vaccination rate, our compliance with the NY HERO Act, and my optimistic look ahead.

With thanks, I am pleased to share with you that the Mount community has hit the 80% mark for vaccination against COVID-19. As you will recall from my previous communication, I identified 80% as the target for lifting the indoor mask mandate at the Mount. Whereas I wish this message was to inform you of my lifting of the mask mandate, regulations beyond my control require that we continue with the mandate at this moment.

Since sending out that communication, the Governor of New York has invoked the [NY HERO Act](#), which identifies COVID-19 as an airborne infectious disease. By making this designation, businesses are required to enact plans meant to provide protection against airborne infectious diseases. You will find the [College of Mount Saint Vincent's plan online](#). One of the requirements of these protections is that businesses *require appropriate face coverings when physical distancing cannot be maintained and in accordance with applicable guidance from the State Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. The CDC continues to suggest that those who are unvaccinated wear masks in indoor public places, and *if you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission*.

Unfortunately, our county continues to be in an [area of high transmission](#), but as soon as we receive updated information on the expiration of the NY HERO Act, CDC guidance, or a change in the transmission rate in our area, I will reconsider our indoor mask mandate.

To those of you who are consistently and correctly wearing your masks indoors—thank you. To those who are not complying with the mask mandate, I ask that for the continued health and safety of our community that you do your part to protect the Mount.

As a reminder, the requirement for vaccination or approved exemption went into effect for employees on September 7, 2021. Students have until October 15 to be in-compliance with either COVID-19 vaccination or approved exemption. *Students' failure to comply with this requirement will result in academic suspension and dismissal from campus*. Given our community's commitment to our mission and values, I am confident that we will exceed the 80% vaccination rate of our community with the hope of returning to what is typically expected from the experience of a college community.

Be well, take care, and many thanks for your continued commitment to our community's health and safety!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan R. Burns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Susan R. Burns, Ph.D.  
President