

OFFICE of STUDENT LIFE



STUDENT ORG COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT



Dear Student Leaders: I hope that your winter break was restful, joyful, healthy and safe and that spring semester has started off well.

I want to thank you for your leadership in finding ways to continue your student organization's engagement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as in-person gatherings and events had to be suspended. I have been so impressed with your creativity, passion and dedication to making the most of virtual tools and opportunities.

Now that the university has resumed in-person classes and the City of Columbus's stay-at-home order is set to expire on February 6, we have been working with our public health and medical experts to develop a phased-in approach to enabling limited in-person engagement.

We are hoping to resume some activities as early as next week and will provide an update on Monday morning to confirm if this timeline will advance or if we need to make any adjustments. Please understand that to begin to introduce in-person activities, it is critical that all students strictly follow the Safe and Healthy requirements. To be very clear, participating in gatherings, especially without proper masking and physical distancing, will be a detriment and is a violation of our safe and healthy requirements. While I appreciate that everyone is eager to come back together and the pandemic is overstaying its welcome, to continue fighting COVID-19 we simply must maintain our focus, and that includes abiding by the university's requirements, as well as those established by the state (curfew of 11 p.m.) and city (stay-at-home order). If we do not do these things, we will have no choice but to maintain the events/gatherings suspension.

To provide a bit more detail about the current plan, below is an overview:

Monday, February 8: Allow student organizations to begin submitting requests to host events and/or gatherings of ten or fewer people

Friday, February 12: Events/gatherings of ten or fewer to begin

A few notes about this opportunity:

- This permission applies to in-person events and gatherings on-campus and off-campus, including tabling activities.

- Adherence to federal, state and local public health requirements and guidance is required.
- The university continues to monitor best practices and evidence, including the emerging topic of double masking which has been shown to offer increased levels of protection. We encourage students who will be engaging in more face-to-face activities as a result of the resumption of events/gatherings to wear two masks.
- Your organization must confirm its risk mitigation details as part of the space reservation process, working with event planning staff from the campus venue in question.
- Food will not be permitted to be served or consumed at events and gatherings held on campus.
- Your organization's primary advisor must be aware of your plans and provide written approval to the event planning contact from the venue hosting your event or gathering. This approval from your advisor can be given via e-mail in reply to your reservation confirmation.
- Space reservation requests will be accepted beginning on Monday, February 8. Information about requesting space in Student Life facilities, including a link to the space request tool, can be found at ohiounion.osu.edu/meetings_events/space_requests/ .
- We continue to encourage hybrid activities to ensure broad access to student organization activities.
- Club Sports organizations should work with Student Life's department of Recreational Sports to determine approved activities and space reservations. All gatherings of clubs must have pre-approval from Recreational Sports before beginning. Sport Club officers will receive further guidance from Recreational Sports in the coming days.

I want to be clear that while we are dedicated to supporting students in resuming safe, in-person engagement, we will also closely and constantly monitor the positivity and prevalence rates of the virus on our campus and in the community. It will be important for us to respond swiftly and make any changes necessary to promote a safe and healthy environment, including if we need to suspend activities again. Likewise, we will analyze the environment to determine when it might be possible to more widely open up event and gathering opportunities.

Thank you again for your leadership, resilience and dedication to leadership and student involvement.

Together As Buckeyes,

Melissa S. Shivers, PhD
Senior Vice President for Student Life
The Ohio State University



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