USU Makes Face Coverings Mandatory for Fall 2020 Semester

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Utah State University President Noelle E. Cockett has implemented a temporary policy that makes face coverings mandatory through fall semester on all campuses. The new policy builds upon the executive order Gov. Gary Herbert put into effect for state buildings and facilities.

“USU is a research university, and the best available research demonstrates that if everyone wore face coverings, it would significantly lower the transmission rate of the disease,” said President Cockett. “Face coverings are key to minimizing the risk of COVID-19 on our campuses and centers this fall, and by working together, we can keep our employees and students safe.”

According to the policy, a face covering is cloth or disposable mask that covers both the nose and mouth. Under the policy, face coverings or masks will continue to be required when:

- Inside all university buildings throughout the state, including in elevators, hallways, classrooms, and break rooms.
- In outdoor university spaces where social distancing is difficult.
- In USU vehicles when riding with others.
- Outside when it is difficult to stay six feet from others.

There are common-sense exceptions to the policy, including:

- Inside recreational facilities when social distancing of 6 feet is maintained.
- In an enclosed office or laboratory space that is not shared.
- When eating and drinking in a space designated for this purpose.
- For students living on campus when they are in their own housing units.

The policy will be enforced by supervisors for employees. By fall, the student code will specifically include a provision about following health and safety directives. Students who do not wear a mask to in-person classes will be asked not to return to class unless they have a mask on, and lack of student compliance in not wearing face coverings will be addressed by Student Conduct.

However, the university’s primary goal is to educate about the policy, not police it.

“At USU, we always talk about how we are unique – how Aggies Think, Care, and Act,” said President Cockett. “Wearing a mask is a perfect expression of acting to take care of our Aggie family. Together, we are Aggie strong.”

More information about USU’s policy on face coverings can be found at https://www.usu.edu/covid-19/staying-healthy/face-coverings.

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2. News
3. 2020

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