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## WKU to add mask mandate on Monday

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com)

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Timothy Caboni

In an email to faculty and staff, Western Kentucky University President Timothy Caboni announced Wednesday that everyone on the university's campuses will be expected to wear a mask indoors, effective Monday.

“Beginning Monday, August 9, everyone on WKU’s campuses will be expected to wear a mask indoors. I know this will come as a disappointment to some but will allow us to continue with a normal semester in light of the spread of the delta variant in our communities,” Caboni wrote in the campuswide email.



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The move comes in advance of updated guidance from the university's Coronavirus Task Force, which Caboni noted is slated to be released "in the days ahead."

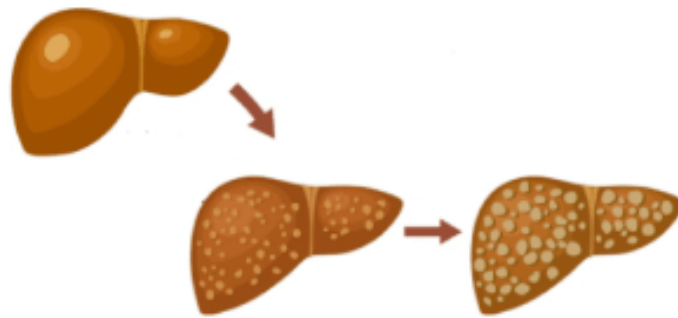


"As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the Coronavirus Task Force, in coordination with public health officials, continues its work to protect our campus community and preserve the WKU Experience. In the days

ahead, the Task Force will release comprehensive guidance for the fall semester,” Caboni wrote in his message.

“.. The Task Force will continue to monitor appropriate variables and to determine when masking will again become optional for vaccinated individuals,” Caboni added.

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His message to campus emphasized the health and safety of students, faculty and staff as the university’s highest priority and urged the unvaccinated to get the shot.



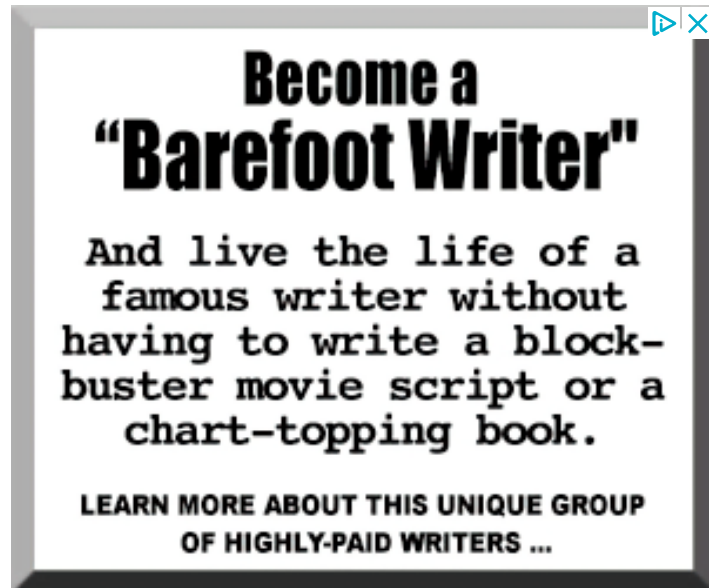
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“Vaccines remain one of the strongest deterrents to viral transmission and serious symptoms or complications ...” Caboni wrote.

Previously, Caboni had publicly stated his wish for campus life to return to a mostly pre-pandemic normal this fall semester, which is slated to kick off for students on Aug. 23. However, the fast-spreading delta variant threw a major wrench in those plans.



Earlier this week, WKU spokesman Jace Lux told the Daily News in a statement that the university won't require students to prove that they've received the coronavirus vaccine when classes begin.

"At this time we are not requiring proof of vaccination status. As the COVID-19 task force continues to solidify plans for the fall semester, that information will be communicated to the campus community," Lux told the Daily News.

"Our COVID 19 task force will continue to evaluate and implement safety measures and will inform the WKU community of any changes before the start of the fall semester. Currently, our expectation is that if

someone hasn't been vaccinated, they will wear a mask while indoors on campus," Lux said.

WKU's Healthy on the Hill website, which lays out the university's response to the pandemic, goes further, stating that "WKU strongly encourages, but will not require, COVID vaccinations for students, faculty and staff."

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