

# Final Report

Kenyon College  
COVID-19 Steering Committee

Spring 2023

**Kenyon**

## Report Context and Goal

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global event and a unique and challenging period in the history of Kenyon College. While the pandemic continues as of May 2023, with 10,000–13,000 cases still reported each day in the U.S., the world has largely transitioned to treating the disease as one of several endemic infections that can spread rapidly through local populations. To mark this period of transition, this report reflects on how Kenyon responded to the pandemic, both as an institution of higher education and as a community of people.

In early 2020, as news of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) reached Gambier, students and faculty were preparing for the well-deserved respite of spring break, to begin on Saturday, Feb. 29. A day earlier, in the first college communication that mentioned COVID-19 by name, Vice President for Student Affairs Meredith Harper Bonham noted that while no cases had been reported in Ohio, the College was making preparations to support the Kenyon community “as circumstances evolve.” The chief action was the formation of the task force that became Kenyon’s COVID-19 Steering Committee.

Circumstances did indeed evolve, and rapidly. The formation of the COVID-19 Task Force was announced on March 6. Four days later, with cases spreading around the country, including several in Ohio, the College announced that Spring Break would be extended by one week and that the first week of classes after break would be held remotely — a first in Kenyon’s history. Less than a week after that, President Sean Decatur made the difficult and unprecedented decision that students would not be able to return to campus and remote instruction would continue through the end of the Spring 2020 semester. As the reality of the pandemic set in, it slowly became clear that the scope of the COVID-19 Steering Committee’s work would extend into every corner of campus and over several academic years.

The goal of this report is to describe the guiding principles and mechanics of Kenyon’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as it related to the teaching, learning, living and working experience, the primary purviews of the COVID-19 Steering Committee. It should serve both as a historical document of a unique time and as a model of a successful crisis response that can be adapted to meet other existential challenges for the College. At the time of the publication of this report, in May of 2023, COVID-19 remains with us. But after three years of thoughtful and creative work, most of the lessons learned from the crisis phase of the pandemic have been successfully incorporated into the standard operating procedures of the College. As such, this report will also conclude the mission of the COVID-19 Steering Committee.

## COVID-19 Steering Committee Members

- Sean Decatur, President (March 2020–June 2022)
- Jeff Bowman, Provost (March 2020–June 2022); Acting President (July 2022–May 2023)
- Chris Smith, Director of Cox Health and Counseling Center (March 2020–January 2022); Senior Director of Wellness (February 22–May 2023)
- Meredith Harper Bonham, VP for Student Affairs (March 2020–July 2021)

- Celestino Limas, VP for Student Affairs (August 2021–May 2023)
- Janet Marsden, VP for Communications (March 20–May 2023)
- Todd Burson, VP for Finance (March 2020–May 2023)
- Ian Smith, VP for Facilities, Planning, and Sustainability (March 2020–May 2023)
- Susan Morse, Chief of Staff (March 2020–May 2023)
- Joe Klesner, Provost (March 2020–June 2020); Special Advisor to the President (July 2020–June 2021) — Chair, March 2020–June 2021
- Drew Kerkhoff, Associate Provost (Jun 2020–May 2023) — Chair, July 2021–May 2023
- Sheryl Hemkin, Acting Provost (July 2022–May 2023)
- Holly Levin, Associate Director of Health Promotion (August 2022–May 2023)

Mar-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	May-23
Sean Decatur, President											
Jeff Bowman, Assoc. Provost		Jeff Bowman, Provost								Jeff Bowman, Acting President	
Chris Smith, Director of Cox Health and Counseling Center				Chris Smith, Senior Director of Wellness							
Janet Marsden, VP for Communications											
Todd Burson, VP for Finance											
Ian Smith, VP for Facilities, Planning and Sustainability											
Susan Morse, Chief of Staff											
Joe Klesner, Provost <b>(Chair)</b>		Joe Klesner, Spec. Adv. <b>(Chair)</b>									
Drew Kerkhoff, Assoc. Provost				Drew Kerkhoff, Assoc. Provost <b>(Chair)</b>							
Meredith Harper Bonham, VP for Student Affairs											
				Celestino Limas, VP for Student Affairs							
								Sheryl Hemkin, Acting Provost			
								Holly Levin, Assoc. Dir. Health			

## History of the College's Pandemic Response, 2020–2023

In providing a history of our institutional response to COVID-19, we seek to outline the main actions taken and the principles that were developed to guide those actions through the Steering Committee. But we should not allow the tidiness of such a synopsis to mask the fact that the historical reality was much messier and full of uncertainty. Where relevant, we highlight some of these messy details to demonstrate the necessarily dynamic nature of the response. However, it is important to acknowledge that the massive effort that was required across campus means that much of the work involved in the COVID-19 response necessarily goes unreported here, including the more externally focused operations of the College such as admissions, financial aid, advancement and construction management. Those operations experienced tremendous market disruptions and required a total retooling of their activities, several times over. We encourage leadership in each division of the College to review the details of their own specific pandemic response efforts as well.

### Spring and Summer 2020: Initial Crisis Response

The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic were characterized by tremendous uncertainty at Kenyon, as they were around the world. Both national and state-level guidance changed rapidly, and like other businesses and institutions of higher education, Kenyon had to adapt quickly.

Beginning in late February, Kenyon's Senior Staff, Board of Trustees, and the Kenyon Emergency Preparedness Team (KEPT) began to meet frequently, often daily, to anticipate pandemic impacts on Kenyon's academic program, student life and wellness, working conditions, campus operations, and college finances. College representatives also established regular contact with Knox Public Health (KPH) and the Knox County Emergency Management Agency, which began regular meetings of their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that included leadership from all local public safety agencies, the local healthcare system, and both Kenyon and Mount Vernon Nazarene University. The goal of the leadership team was to minimize the risk to all members of the Kenyon community, while maintaining the academic program and the integrity of the College. On March 6, the COVID-19 Task Force (which became the Steering Committee) was announced and its mission was articulated:

- Monitoring the guidance from public health authorities and making contingency plans should recommendations about travel, international programs or large-scale gatherings change;
- Preparing the Health and Counseling Center for COVID-19, including establishing protocols for screening, treatment and sharing information with local health partners;
- Reviewing emergency operations plans, including provisions for isolating suspected and confirmed student cases of COVID-19;
- Enhancing our existing cleaning routines and ensuring adequate supplies;
- Exploring options for accommodating work that is completed remotely, whether by a student, faculty member or staff member;

- Exploring options for students who may not be able to return home this summer and/or may have difficulty returning to campus in the fall, and determining what to do should students not be able to study abroad next academic year;
- Establishing communications channels and sharing information about prevention.

With the arrival of COVID-19 cases in Ohio, Governor Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency on March 9, at the end of the first week of spring break. Taking advantage of the spring recess, the College released its first comprehensive set of pandemic policies on March 10. At that point, the plan was to extend spring break by one week, followed by a week of remote instruction, then allow students to return to campus. The extra week of break was to allow faculty to prepare for remote instruction, which was completely new for the vast majority of instructors. The Center for Innovative Pedagogy (CIP) and Library and Information Services (LBIS) staff were engaged to help faculty with technical and pedagogical issues. In addition, all students remaining on campus were sent home, except for those who could not do so for a legitimate reason, such as constraints on international travel or an unsafe living situation off campus. Athletic practices and competitions, campus visits, college-sponsored travel, and events involving 50 or more people were all suspended. A few days later, adjustments to Kenyon's remote work policy were announced, allowing non-essential employees to develop plans with their supervisors for remote work to further reduce the risk of exposure.

College leadership and the rest of the Kenyon community, like much of the U.S., initially clung to the hope that pandemic restrictions would be temporary and classes would resume on campus. But with cases continuing to rise, with deaths mounting, and with healthcare systems being overwhelmed in some cities around the world, it quickly became clear that the pandemic would be a much more long-term challenge, extending over months to years, rather than weeks to months. On March 16, President Decatur let the community know that remote instruction would continue for the remainder of the semester. In doing so, he also emphasized the importance of facing the crisis as a community and established a clear link between the College's pandemic response and our educational mission:

In these times, we are faced with the responsibility of making decisions in a rapidly shifting landscape. To do so, we will draw upon what Kenyon does best: learn from the lessons of history, apply the principles of science, and act with an empathy shaped by our study of the humanities and arts. We will strive to make decisions that optimize the common good. We will care for each other. We will make mistakes, but we will also be forgiving. We will, to paraphrase Marcus Aurelius, remember first and foremost to do the work of human beings. Please know that in these difficult times — especially in these difficult times — I remain ever grateful for all that you, the members of our community, do for Kenyon.

Importantly, this rhetoric of care and togetherness was quickly followed by material policy actions that demonstrated empathy for students, employees, and families. March billing statements, which had unfortunately been released on the usual schedule, were retracted with a forthright apology. Planned changes to the health insurance plan that would have raised costs for employees were suspended. This combination of empathetic communication and meaningful

action, combined with the willingness to own missteps and uncertainties, would come to characterize the best aspects of Kenyon's COVID-19 response.

Careful review, development, and revision of policies continued for the rest of the spring semester. A call center, COVID-specific email account, and response team were set up on March 16 to address questions and concerns from students and their families. By March 24, the College released revisions to the tuition and financial aid schedule, as well as initial guidelines for on-campus work "during the disruption." And by April 1, fully articulated academic and student life guidance was provided including grading (P/D/F became the default, but students could opt out for a letter grade), room/board credits, living expense and emergency grants, technology provision for students off campus (including laptops and help with internet connectivity), continuing pay for student work (whether or not students could continue working), and the availability of remote counseling resources. Kenyon's ceremonial traditions were also addressed directly. Honors Day was changed to an online livestream event while Commencement was delayed to allow further planning. Reunion Weekend was canceled. Summer research and other programs were either canceled or moved online.

During the summer, while most collegiate activities were curtailed, a larger than usual number of students had to remain in Gambier, especially international students. Residential Life and other Student Affairs staff ensured that student needs were met, and employment was provided for as many of them as possible. Because students left during spring break, their belongings remained in their campus residences. More local students and families were allowed brief, scheduled visits to campus to retrieve them, but Student Affairs staff were left with the task to inventory, pack, and ship student possessions from the vast majority of student residences.

Work continued both for the Steering Committee and for Senior Staff, both to address financial challenges and to prepare for the next academic year. The budget gap created by lost revenue and the cost of the pandemic response was estimated to fall between \$18 million and \$57 million for the 2020–21 academic year. On May 14, at an employee forum, it was announced that employee salaries would remain flat and that the College would suspend employer retirement contributions. These actions would allow the College to avoid layoffs and furloughs and maintain full employment for all College employees. A follow-up forum was held on May 20 to address employee questions, and subsequently, employee working groups were formed to address specific issues. Input from the working groups was incorporated into the Return to Campus Protocols (RTCP), which were first released to all employees on June 16.

Communication with students and families also continued through the summer. A preliminary update on May 26 laid out the principles that would guide Kenyon's COVID-19 response: close engagement with local and state expertise, close attention to science-based guidance, and a continued commitment to residential education. The message also stressed openness, creativity, and hope. A message on June 15 built on these principles and provided initial operational details for the coming year, including the academic calendar; move-in schedules; procedures for testing, tracing, and isolation; conduct of courses; athletics; and accommodations. On June 17, Kenyon's COVID-19 Relief Fund was announced, and families

were invited to request reconsideration of their financial aid packages. Fuller details of the academic calendar, along with a 10% reduction in tuition, were announced on July 14. To foster communication, online forums were held on June 18 and July 15 for students and families to ask further questions and provide feedback. Answers to literally hundreds of questions were [published on Kenyon's website](#).

The development of the academic calendar was a particularly difficult issue, and it illustrates the complexity involved in making important decisions quickly. Because Kenyon's residential spaces could not accommodate all students in single rooms, only a subset of students could be learning on campus at any one time. Initially, Senior Staff settled on a "three semester" calendar that would extend the academic year into the summer of 2021, but would allow every student to spend two semesters on campus. Oberlin College was opting for a similar plan. This plan was shared with faculty on a Friday, but by Sunday, Senior Staff had convened to reconsider. Extending the academic calendar would be a strain on employees who were already facing tremendous uncertainty, and it would also commit the institution to a long-term course of action that would significantly disrupt traditional operations. In the end, Senior Staff settled on retaining a two-semester calendar, but having only two classes of students on campus at any one time. After deliberations and valuable feedback from consultants, it was decided that first-years, transfer students, and sophomores would be on campus in the fall semester, while juniors and seniors would return to Gambier for the spring semester. Students off-campus would take classes remotely. Based on historical patterns of enrollment and pedagogical approach, courses would be taught either exclusively remotely, exclusively in-person, or as a hybrid, with both in-person and remote students. In retrospect, while walking back the plan so quickly did create a sense of whiplash for the campus community, it also demonstrated that the response process was dynamic, and in the end, the decision was widely supported.

As Senior Staff worked out the high-level issues, Reopening Working Groups led by staff and faculty sorted out many of the details. Contracts had to be established with COVID-19 testing partners, and the College rented out the Comfort Inn in Mount Vernon for the entire academic year as isolation space. Transport and care procedures were developed for isolated and quarantined students. Cleaning protocols and signage had to be developed for campus buildings. Take-out dining was enabled, and tents were brought in to take teaching outdoors. Classroom technology for remote and hybrid instruction had to be procured, and staff and faculty had to be trained in its use. Building airflow and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems were analyzed. Filters were upgraded where possible and classrooms in less-ventilated areas were used less frequently. Interior pedestrian flow was organized to reduce two-way traffic. Classrooms were rearranged to allow for at least six feet between all seated students and the instructor, and additional non-traditional campus spaces were converted to de-densified teaching spaces. Protocols were developed for courses with active components like labs, studios, or performances. Academic policies and courses had to be adjusted for remote instruction and residency requirements had to be temporarily waived. Meetings continued with Knox Public Health and the Knox County EOC, and all campus protocols for testing, masking, distancing, etc. were vetted by KPH. It was a very busy summer.

## Fall 2020: The Empty Campus

With policy and operational changes in place, the College prepared for the arrival of first-year, sophomore, and transfer students in August 2020. Because such a public health response requires collective action by well-informed individuals, the College publicized three related documents to the employees, students, and families during the second week of August: the Return to Work Protocols, the Kenyon College Commitment, which dedicated every individual to a common set of principles and practices, and the [Student Conduct Amendment](#), which specified additional COVID-related student responsibilities and consequences. Masks were required for all community members when in shared spaces (indoors and out), daily temperature and symptom checks were required (Kinsa thermometers were provided to everyone), students were put on a compulsory testing schedule that would cover one quarter of students each week, and in collaboration with The Ohio State University, the Ohio Department of Health, and the Village of Gambier, [wastewater testing](#) was initiated.

Students arrived under a “Quiet Period” during the week of Aug. 17–24, during which all students were tested, meals from Peirce Dining Hall were take-out only, and all classes were held remotely. Kenyon’s [initial COVID-19 Dashboard](#) was published, and it was updated each weekday through May 14, 2021. Weekly dashboard email updates were introduced on Sept. 1, as was a system of COVID-19 Alert Levels. The Quiet Period extended through Sept. 5, and in-person instruction began under the Low alert level.

On Sept. 10, the first positive test came back for a student. The situation was made even more complicated by the fact that the individual had been infected off-campus late in the summer and thus should have been exempted from testing for three months. They were also asymptomatic, and in consultation with KPH, it was determined that they did not have to go into isolation. Since the positive test would necessarily appear on the dashboard, and with anxieties running high at this early stage of the pandemic, the decision was made to communicate with the campus to contextualize the result. In the message, it was also noted that communication about individual results would not be the norm, in order to protect privacy. So while the campus had its first positive test, it had not yet experienced an active case.

A little more than a month later, wastewater testing began to show elevated levels of viral RNA, and on Oct. 10, the campus was moved to a Moderate alert level. Almost two weeks later, the first positive test was reported, for an employee who was working remotely. The campus was informed of the case on Oct. 24, the last time an individual case would be addressed. In response to the confirmed presence of the virus in the Kenyon community, the Moderate alert level was extended, and all students and employees were issued tests in the following days. After comprehensive testing revealed no additional cases, the campus was returned to the Low alert level on Oct. 28.

While the campus had still not experienced a real outbreak, accumulated fatigue, anxiety, and isolation, along with the lack of a fall break, were having a noticeable negative impact on the entire Kenyon community, including students, employees, and families, both on and off campus. On behalf of their peers, student leaders requested a mental health day off from classes, and

though some faculty and other students felt it would only represent further disruption, classes were suspended for Nov. 6. Around this same time, with hopeful reports of progress on the development of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, the College announced that sophomores would be allowed to remain on campus for the spring semester. Part of the motivation for this move was to restore more classes to in-person instruction, since hybrid instruction was found to be particularly demoralizing and exhausting for students and especially faculty. Cases had been minimal to that point in the semester, and with hope for vaccines on the horizon, the risks associated with increased density were deemed manageable in exchange for returning to a fuller, more vibrant campus environment. In retrospect, it may have been possible to have all students return to campus in the spring, but at the time, the more conservative path seemed prudent.

In mid-November, with the end of the semester in sight, cases began to rise both nationally and locally, and on Nov. 14, the campus moved again to the Moderate alert level. The more restrictive measures would be maintained through the remainder of the residential portion of the semester (Nov. 25), as students would finish all classes remotely after Thanksgiving. The semester drew to a close on Dec. 18, with only eight student cases, several of which appeared after students had left campus for Thanksgiving.

## Spring and Summer 2021: Life Continues Under COVID-19

In order to limit travel to and from campus, spring break was eliminated from the academic calendar for 2021. As a result, the semester began two weeks later than usual, on Feb. 1. Students again began the semester under a Quiet Period, and when initial rounds of testing yielded 17 student positives, restrictions were initially extended through Febr. 28. However, when subsequent testing showed very low positivity, the campus was moved to the Low alert level on Feb. 22. And while young people were not yet authorized for vaccination, Kenyon partnered with KPH to host a community vaccination clinic at the Lowry Center on Feb. 12.

Case levels remained relatively low until late March, when a rise prompted a shift to the Moderate alert level and another round of comprehensive testing. The time required for shipping and processing Everlywell's qPCR tests, while fast, meant that the Quiet Period extended up through a student vaccination clinic at the Lowry Center on April 8. When positivity rates were again revealed to be low, the campus returned to the Low alert level on April 9, and remained there through the end of the semester on May 17. After a shortened "senior week," the Commencement for the Class of 2021, with a limit of two guests per student, was held outside on McBride Field on May 21. There had been a total of 56 student cases over the course of the semester, but no students or employees required hospitalization or acute care.

In comparison with 2020, the summer of 2021 was very active. Kenyon's internal summer programs, including Summer Scholars research, returned in full force, as did some conferences, camps, and programs for admitted students. While Reunion Weekend was not held on campus, a full week of virtual programming was offered by class and for affinity groups to keep 1,000+ alumni connected, even though they could not return to the hill. Prospective students were again allowed to visit campus, and the campus had to prepare for a larger-than-expected

first-year class. All of this activity provided a welcome respite from active COVID-19 response, but the Steering Committee used the opportunity both to look back at the previous year and to look forward to the fall semester.

The advent of readily available vaccines prompted a comprehensive review of COVID-19 policies, as well as an assessment of the successes, challenges, and costs of the College's pandemic response to that point. Looking back, the response was judged to be highly successful. Throughout the academic year, some community members expressed frustration that Kenyon was "not doing enough," while others expressed concern about the mental, social, and emotional costs of restrictions imposed on students in particular. Responding to concerns from both perspectives was made significantly easier by two important factors. First, College policies were designed and updated in accordance with federal, state, and local guidance and the best scientific evidence available, especially that of the CDC, and with careful attention both to the approaches taken by our peer institutions and to the resources available in our local community. Second, the humane and transparent tone of communications with students, staff, and families fostered an environment of trust, even in the face of significant disagreement. And while there were disagreements, the vast majority of the Kenyon community seemed supportive of the College's response. This success, however, did not come without considerable costs.

Personal and cultural costs were deep. COVID-related fatigue, anxiety, and isolation, coupled with the personal challenges and losses that everyone experienced, had created an environment susceptible to distrust, overreaction, and malaise. Volatility, distrust, and exhaustion were exacerbated by larger societal events, from the murder by police of George Floyd and the rise of Black Lives Matter protests across the nation, to violent protests against pandemic-related public health measures at the Ohio statehouse. The Steering Committee also reached the conclusion that the dynamic and comprehensive nature of the pandemic response, itself, had created two secondary problems. First, when the campus shifted too frequently between alert levels, even in response to solid data, there was a collective sense of reactive "whiplash" that sometimes amplified rather than ameliorated feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or distrust. Second, even though public health measures were presented in terms of mutual care among all members of the community, the fact that they were required by the institution created the sense that the College, and often particular employees, ought to be responsible for compliance and enforcement. This de facto expansion of the College mission to include public health administration and enforcement created tensions among members of the campus community and exhausted the professional resources and goodwill of employees who were put in the position of managing these tensions. Especially hard hit were employees in Student Affairs (including Residential Life, Health and Counseling Services, and Campus Safety), LBIS, and Dining Services/AVI.

The financial costs of the pandemic response had also been significant, with increased expenditures on public health and student support extending into the millions while revenues were reduced by decreases in the on-campus population. Still, through careful management of resources, including federal and state COVID-19 relief funds, Senior Staff was able to balance the College's budget without having laid off or furloughed a single employee. In mid-May, not

only were employer retirement contributions restored moving forward, the contributions that had been suspended were repaid into the account of every employee.

In light of changing circumstances, several changes were made to the pandemic response policies in anticipation of the fall 2021 semester. COVID-19 vaccination was required for all students and strongly encouraged for employees. The decision to not require employee vaccination was made in part due to the politicization of the pandemic, but also to avoid employment issues that could negatively impact campus operations. The RTCP was revised with separate guidance for vaccinated vs. unvaccinated individuals and with reduced limitations on gatherings and travel. Indoor masking requirements were also eliminated for fully vaccinated individuals, though those who continued masking were supported in doing so. While contact tracing would still take place, exposed students would quarantine in their residence. With the limited past use of isolation housing, the vaccination requirement, and in-residence quarantine, the College also decided not to renew its lease on the Comfort Inn. Overall, the desire of the Steering Committee was to chart a pathway towards a more “endemic” understanding of COVID-19 for the campus community, and an integration of COVID-19 management into the day-to-day operating procedures of the College.

There was even talk of drawing the mission of the Steering Committee to a close during the fall semester. Then reports of the newly evolved Delta variant of the coronavirus began to emerge, as did the realization that while the vaccines were highly effective at preventing severe illness and death, vaccinated individuals could in fact still become infected. The game had changed, again.

## Academic Year 2021-2022: Learning to Live with COVID-19

The lead-up to the fall 2021 semester was a tumultuous one, made even more complicated by the fact that the first-year class was considerably larger than expected. The inventory of student housing was simply not sufficient to house all of our students. A first semester abroad program in Copenhagen released some of the pressure, but the College also procured off-campus housing at the Pines apartments in nearby Apple Valley. Early in August, new guidance from the CDC and rising cases both locally and nationally prompted both the College and the village to again require indoor masking. Senior staff also made the decision to again lease rooms at the Comfort Inn to use as isolation housing. While the entire hotel was not available, a block of rooms on the second floor was reserved.

As soon as students returned to campus, COVID-19 did too, and the first case was reported during first-year Convocation. The Delta variant proved to be highly transmissible and the campus experienced its first true outbreak during the first three weeks of September, by which time 140 students had tested positive. Having retired the prior year’s Alert Levels over the summer, the college introduced a simplified set of Campus Activity Levels (with 1 being the most “normal” level and 4 the most cautious) to allow better coordination of response efforts across campus, and the campus continued at Activity Level 2. The management of the outbreak was further complicated by the ready availability of self-administered rapid antigen tests, which had a much faster turnaround time, but lower perceived reliability than College-supplied PCR kits. The

results of rapid tests were also not automatically reported to Kenyon and KPH authorities, which significantly complicated case management, contact tracing, and the issuing of isolation orders. The isolation housing capacity at the Comfort Inn and in unoccupied Pines units was quickly overwhelmed, and with no place else to house them, newly infected students were instructed to isolate in their campus residence.

This move to isolation in residential spaces, while necessary, proved upsetting for some students, families, and employees, but it also prompted productive acknowledgement of very real limits on the capacity of the institution to respond during a severe outbreak. The limitations of both institutional capacity and regional economies was also evident in the larger comparative context across peer institutions. Many highly resourced institutions — especially in New England, where the Broad Institute had established affordable partnerships for rapid testing — maintained rigid compulsory testing protocols and had access to more extensive off-campus housing resources and dining options for students in isolation. At the other end of the spectrum, Sewanee: The University of the South boldly abandoned all institutional testing and active case management, citing the fact that the campus was practically fully vaccinated so the risk of severe illness and death was minimal, especially for a young, generally healthy student population. Interestingly, across small liberal arts colleges, the occurrence or absence of substantial outbreaks did not seem to correlate with the intensity of testing and isolation policies. Some schools with more restrictive policies (e.g., Connecticut College) had outbreaks similar to Kenyon's, while other peers had policies similar to Kenyon (e.g., the College of Wooster) but no outbreak. Even Sewanee, which had rolled back all institutional testing and case management, saw outcomes similar to those at Kenyon and other schools.

As a secondary wave of cases came through campus in early October, the College continued to respond in accordance with guidance from the CDC and local public health authorities. While the Steering Committee considered further stepping down testing and case management like Sewanee, it was decided that keeping a stable set of practices for at least the remainder of the fall semester would provide better support for the campus community. The College continued to use isolation spaces at the Comfort Inn as long as they were available, but the Pines were found to be unmanageable in terms of cleaning and food delivery. In the lead up to Thanksgiving, after several weeks of low case counts, the campus was shifted to Activity Level 1 to reduce restrictions on gatherings. On Nov. 17, a booster clinic was held at the Lowry Center in partnership with KPH, and 730 doses of the vaccine were administered. Upon return from Thanksgiving Break, a round of comprehensive testing was conducted, with the campus temporarily at Level 3, but only a handful of positive results were found. The fall semester concluded on Dec. 18, with a cumulative 235 cases among students.

While the fall was the semester of the Delta variant, spring 2022 began with the looming threat of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. Before classes began, on Jan. 13, the CDC changed its guidance on isolation, reducing it from 10 to five days. Students returned to campus under Activity Level 3 with a comprehensive round of testing, and instructors were given the option of starting their classes remotely for the first two weeks of the semester. Entry PCR

testing resulted in 37 student cases, and the College continued to use the Comfort Inn for isolation housing, as long as rooms were available.

The new five-day isolation period created two challenges for Kenyon's existing COVID-19 management strategy. First, the turnaround time on PCR tests was two to three days, which meant that by the time a result came back to confirm a positive case, half or more of the isolation period had already elapsed. Second, the rapid turnover of isolated individuals created challenges both for AVI, which was short-staffed, and at the Comfort Inn, which required that the room be empty for 72 hours before cleaning. In response to the first issue, after resisting rapid antigen tests in the fall semester, Kenyon began supplying them to students (one per student per week through the mail center) on Jan. 21. Isolation housing at the Comfort Inn continued, as long as rooms were available; however, the strain on staff managing the housing and care for students isolating off campus was clearly becoming unsustainable.

As the cases identified by entry testing eased, the campus was moved to Activity Level 2 on Jan. 26 and to Level 1 on Feb. 9. At the same time, in response to the changes in CDC guidance and to shift their resources to other pressing public health issues, Knox Public Health decided to suspend their case management and contact tracing program. Because Kenyon's contact-tracing efforts were dependent on KPH, contact tracing was also suspended on campus on Feb. 9.

While new cases had continued to accumulate slowly over the early part of the semester, numbers began to rise rapidly on Feb. 13, and by Feb. 18, 175 students had tested positive in five days and 159 students were in isolation. This far outstripped the capacity of the College to manage student isolation at the Comfort Inn, and the decision was made to suspend that program. Moving forward, a student who tested positive would isolate in their residential space or off campus, and the final student isolated at the Comfort Inn returned to campus on Feb. 20. The February 2022 Omicron outbreak was Kenyon's largest, but case numbers came down even more quickly than they had risen, and by Feb. 25, only a week after the peak of the outbreak, fewer than 20 students were in isolation and no new cases were being reported.

Despite the size of the Omicron outbreak, discussions of pandemic policies on campus had changed. While many in the community were displeased with isolating students on campus and still favored a highly conservative approach focused on mandated high-efficiency masks and other constraints, more voices were being raised in favor of making masks optional. Many of those who favored maintaining relatively tight restrictions cited the risk to the most vulnerable members of the campus community, including the elderly, immunocompromised individuals, and those with pre-existing comorbidities. On the other hand, those who wished to loosen restrictions cited the low risk of severe illness for fully vaccinated healthy individuals, the effective protection provided to the wearer of a high-efficiency mask, and concerns about the cumulative mental health and emotional costs of maintaining tight restrictions. This debate in Gambier largely mirrored discussions happening across the country, although happily it was generally less polarized, more cogently reasoned, and more empathic than the national

discourse. It also reflected the tradeoffs that had been at the center of decision making by the COVID-19 steering committee for many months.

On March 3, 2022, the CDC published a new scheme of “[COVID Community Levels](#),” which were based on county-level data on hospital admissions and COVID-19 deaths, rather than simply case numbers. This new guidance explicitly shifted the focus from risk of infection to risk of severe illness, and the accompanying recommendations on prevention moved away from broad mandates and towards helping individuals make informed decisions based on their own local circumstances. In turn, institutional recommendations were focused on making sure that individuals had access to relevant information and resources like test kits and masks.

This change in guidance from the CDC empowered the Steering Committee to adopt a more “endemic” strategy, especially in light of conditions in the local community and the campus discussions described above. On March 3, the campus moved to a new Activity Level 0, which made masks optional and eliminated most other COVID-19 restrictions, and future changes in Activity Level were tied to local COVID-19 Community Levels. Masks could still be required by instructors or other individuals in enclosed, private spaces like classrooms, offices, or meeting rooms, and the College would continue to update case numbers on the COVID-19 website and provide masks (both surgical and N95) and test kits to students. The timing of the move, relatively close on the heels of a large outbreak, was upsetting to some members of the campus community, but it was welcomed by most and allowed many of us to see our students and colleagues below the nose (often smiling) for the first time in two years in the days leading up to spring break, which began on Saturday, March 5.

Classes resumed on March 17. Students were encouraged to test themselves before returning to campus, but there was not a round of mandatory entry testing. Throughout the rest of the semester, COVID-19 Community Levels remained low to moderate. New cases were reported by students, but only 0–4 per week. During exam week, as students tested in preparation for departure from campus, a few more cases turned up, and the spring 2022 semester ended on May 13 with a total of 338 student cases. The class of 2022 graduated on May 21, and in a joyous return to Gambier, almost half of the class of 2020 participated in their own Commencement ceremony the next day.

## Academic Year 2022–2023: Living with COVID-19

Summer campus activities returned to relatively normal levels in 2022. The virus was present on campus, and cases were reported by participants in several summer programs, including admitted students participating in the KEEP (Kenyon Educational Enrichment Program) / STEM programs. Since the Cox Health and Counseling Center is closed during the summer, infected individuals were connected with local healthcare resources when necessary, but no acute care was required.

In reviewing campus COVID-19 policies for the fall semester, the Steering Committee decided to remain focused on the CDC mandate for institutions to provide information and resources necessary for individuals to make responsible decisions to protect themselves and others. Thus,

a simplified version of the COVID-19 dashboard would be maintained, and informational updates would be provided to the campus weekly as needed through the Kenyon Today newsletter. Likewise, the College would continue to provide masks to students and more rapid tests were procured through the Ohio Department of Education. The decision to mask was left to individual discretion, though instructors and others could still require masks in private spaces for classes, meetings etc. The Campus Activity Levels were retired in favor of directly following the recommendations of the CDC COVID-19 Community Levels framework.

On Aug. 11, the CDC altered another detail of their prevention guidance that had important implications for the fall semester. Exposed but asymptomatic individuals were no longer required to quarantine; instead it was recommended that they wear a mask for 10 days. For colleges and universities, this change would reduce both student absences and simplify the lives of students, instructors, and student affairs staff, and it was incorporated into Kenyon's campus policy as well. Students were also required to remain up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations as they became eligible for booster shots. For first-year and sophomore students, this was part of a more comprehensive push for vaccination compliance, and students who remained out of compliance faced the consequence of not being able to register for classes until after standard first-year registration was complete. To help make sure everyone in the campus community had access to necessary vaccines, a joint COVID/flu shot clinic was held during the fall semester at the Lowry Center on Nov. 3.

Throughout the summer of 2022, cases continued to rise across the U.S. and around the world, and the virus spread quickly in Gambier when students again congregated on campus. Classes began on Aug. 25, with 12 students already in isolation, and by Sept. 2, the campus reached another outbreak peak with 110 active cases among students. While this peak was not as high as the spring 2021 outbreak, case numbers came down more slowly, with significant numbers of students in isolation over the next three weeks. But other than a small cluster of cases in October, the remainder of the fall semester was relatively quiet.

More striking than the number of cases, however, was the increased resilience of the campus community to the outbreak. Whether due to experience, increased knowledge about actual risks, decreased sensitivity, or simple exhaustion, students, faculty, and staff (as well as families) seemed to take the outbreak largely in stride. Many chose to mask or require masks during the outbreak, and students picked up and presumably used many rapid tests. Life was disrupted for those who fell ill, but again no one was hospitalized or required acute care. Students who missed class made arrangements with their professors as they would with any illness. Students isolated in their residential spaces and picked up their food (or had friends pick up their food) from Peirce. Much like the instructors, staff in the Health Center, Residence Life, and AVI were prepared to manage students with COVID-19 much as they would any student who had fallen ill. Campus life, both curricular and co-curricular, went on.

By the end of September, new cases had tapered off, and the remainder of the semester was quiet. Over the first two full weeks of classes, 196 student cases had accumulated, and by the time the semester ended on Dec. 16, only 37 more students had reported positive tests.

Fortunately, the spring 2023 semester has remained quiet, and as the semester draws to a close, only 43 student cases have been reported on campus since Jan. 1, and no more than three cases have occurred in a single day.

COVID-19 remains with us at Kenyon, but its grip on campus life has diminished. Since the end of the fall 2022 outbreak, the Steering Committee has only met to discuss high-level strategic issues, and COVID-19 management has been successfully incorporated into the day-to-day operations of the Health Center, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Operations, Maintenance, HR, and AVI.

# The Kenyon Pandemic Response as Crisis Management

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented global phenomenon that was an existential crisis for Kenyon and other institutions, both inside and outside higher education. But because existential institutional threats can take many forms, it is useful to consider the pandemic as a case study in successful crisis management. Here we briefly identify two key types of challenge presented by the pandemic, as well as six key strategies and practices that made for a successful pandemic response. The hope is that these could be translated or adapted to other crisis situations.

## Key Challenges

The challenges of the pandemic were of course numerous and ever changing, but two types of institutional challenges stand out.

1. **Finances and Logistics:** Over the course of the pandemic, Kenyon lost approximately \$39M in revenue, including \$20M in tuition discounts and reduced enrollment, \$16M in lost room and board, \$2M from canceled conferences, and \$1M less in Bookstore sales. In addition to this large loss of revenue, the pandemic response also resulted in approximately \$9.4M added expenditures, including rent for the Comfort Inn, tests, masks, takeout containers, instructional technology and equipment, and personnel support costs, including COVID leave and continuity of pay for student workers who could not return to campus. The College did receive approximately \$6M in COVID-19 relief funds from federal and state authorities. While the College continued to be able to balance its budget every year without any layoffs or furloughs, these financial challenges have had lasting budget impacts. Wages for all employees were frozen for the 2020-2021 fiscal year and capital investments in maintenance, repair, and replacement had to be reduced by \$9.2M over the course of 2019–2021.

In addition to direct financial challenges, logistical challenges related to adapting almost all College operations to the pandemic were significant. These included: persistent labor shortages in key areas, especially AVI; personnel turnover and small applicant pools for open positions; supply chain issues for everything from food to construction materials to technology; transitioning to and de-transitioning from remote work; and the expansion of duties for faculty and staff that entailed not just more work, but unfamiliar work.

2. **Uncertainty, Mistrust, and Fatigue:** The chaotic nature of a global pandemic caused by a rapidly evolving viral pathogen generated enormous amounts of uncertainty. Even though knowledge about COVID-19 accumulated quickly and tremendous technical advances like mRNA vaccines became available rapidly, the resulting changes in public health guidance, often in seemingly contradictory directions, only increased anxiety. On campus, frequent shifts in aspects of the pandemic response, even when made for good reasons, created a collective sense of reactive “whiplash” that sometimes amplified rather than ameliorated feelings of insecurity and anxiety. And even though public health measures were presented in terms of mutual care among all members of the community,

the fact that they were required by the institution created the sense that the College, and often particular employees, ought to be responsible for compliance and enforcement. This created tensions among members of the campus community and exhausted the professional resources and goodwill of employees who were put in the position of managing these tensions. Especially hard hit were employees in Student Affairs (including Residential Life, Health Services, and Campus Safety), LBIS, and Dining Services/AVI as well as Faculty.

While the community responded to the pandemic as a whole with resilience and grace, the fatigue of mission creep, coupled with the sense of personal and professional isolation, frayed many of our social bonds and eroded our sense of collective purpose, creating an environment susceptible to distrust, overreaction, and malaise. These feelings were exacerbated by a more general environment of political polarization, both nationally and locally, including the politicization of the pandemic itself. Faculty, staff, students, and their families brought a wide variety of perspectives to many aspects of the pandemic response, and tensions among those viewpoints, especially in the context of limited resources and logistical challenges, were sometimes difficult to resolve. Even as the campus learned to live with COVID-19, the lingering effects of anxiety, isolation, and disconnection have proven very difficult to escape for both students and employees. Work to rebuild that sense of community continues in every division of the College.

## Keys to Successful Response

Kenyon's response to the pandemic was not without errors, but it was generally quite successful. Here we highlight six key strategies and practices that led to that success.

1. **Timeliness:** From the very beginning, the College consistently acted quickly to address challenges as they were identified. This was enabled by the fact that, especially in the first year-and-a-half of the pandemic, the Steering Committee met frequently, often daily, to bring new issues to light and respond effectively. The responsiveness of the Board of Trustees was also important in this regard, especially early in the pandemic.
2. **Collaboration:** Staff from every division of the College were involved in the response, and with a few highly instructive exceptions, efforts were well-coordinated across campus. This was enabled in part by the composition of the Steering Committee, which included senior leadership from every division that had significant impacts on the day-to-day operations of the College. In addition, the Reopening Working Groups from the spring of 2020 involved employees from all pertinent divisions who had specific knowledge and expertise relevant to the charge of the particular working group.
3. **Evidence-based:** We closely monitored the evolving scientific understanding of COVID-19 and responded to changing guidance from the CDC and other public health authorities and experts. We also carefully watched the actions of other institutions of higher education, both to capitalize on the insights and learn from the missteps of our peers.

4. **Off-campus connections:** Careful coordination with public and private partners off campus was essential to our effort, including Knox Public Health, our attorneys at Bricker & Eckler, testing and other healthcare providers, the Mayor and Village Council of Gambier, and the Knox Emergency Management Agency. A subset of the Steering Committee met weekly with KPH and with testing partners at Everly Health.
5. **Principled but flexible:** The guiding principles for our pandemic response were established early and thoughtfully, and they did not change. At the same time, we did change the nature of our particular actions in response to new opportunities and information (e.g., vaccinations, rapid tests, masking information, CDC guidance). But even as actions changed, they were always in alignment with the guiding principles, which the Steering Committee discussed frequently.
6. **Clear, empathic communication paired with material action:** Early on, a premium was placed on our communication strategy. Communication had to be frequent, meaningful, and consistent across all audiences, including staff, students, and families. And we built in mechanisms for feedback and exchange by holding regular online forums for various constituencies and engaging regularly with the faculty meeting, Staff Council, and Student Council.

Because the pandemic was affecting all of us strongly, but in different ways, it was critical that we both acknowledge our personal losses and stress that we would rely on one another and face the challenge together. Thus, throughout the first two years, official communication always came from a person, whether the President, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Provost, or the Chair of the Steering Committee.

Finally, the communication was most useful when it communicated clear material actions that the College was taking, and the reasons behind those particular actions. Action gave purpose to the empathy and also reinforced the consistent principles that were guiding Kenyon's response to the pandemic.

## Closing Comments

Over the past three years, the Kenyon community has been remarkably resilient in the face of COVID-19. As weeks of anxiety stretched into months of uncertainty and years of resolved (or resigned) endurance, we have all experienced profound personal and institutional losses. But while the collective trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be ignored, we must also acknowledge that the Kenyon community came together to support one another. Both individually and collectively, we consistently acted in the interests of the common good. Throughout the process, even as circumstances changed, we continued to embody the ideals that President Decatur laid out in the early days of the pandemic.

[We] will draw upon what Kenyon does best: learn from the lessons of history, apply the principles of science, and act with an empathy shaped by our study of the humanities and arts. We will strive to make decisions that optimize the common good. We will care for each other. We will make mistakes, but we will also be forgiving. We will, to paraphrase Marcus Aurelius, remember first and foremost to do the work of human beings.

In doing this “work of human beings,” Kenyon distinguished itself as a community driven by a commitment to the well being of all of its members and knit together by empathy and understanding. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic truly involved every single employee and student at Kenyon College during the period 2020–2023, as well as many external partners, including Knox Public Health and the Village of Gambier. We are grateful for everyone’s efforts. Kenyon’s faculty, staff, students, families, trustees, and alumni were all incredibly resilient, thoughtful, creative, and constructive, even through the most challenging periods of crisis. The COVID-19 Steering Committee is honored to have served the community during this difficult time, and we want to acknowledge that, fundamentally, Kenyon was able to weather the pandemic because of the grace that all of us were willing to extend to one another. *Nos magnanimiter crucem sustinuimus*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> We valiantly bore the cross. Thanks to Prof. Zoe Kontes for the Latin.

## Appendix: Kenyon COVID-19 Communications Timeline

The following is a timeline based simply on campus communications to students, staff, and families. It does not (nearly) capture the efforts involved in Kenyon's COVID response.

### Spring 2020: Initial crisis response

11 Feb 2020	VP Bonham email to family monitoring Coronavirus globally: affirming local concern for students, especially those with connections to China
28 Feb 2020	First Kenyon News Bulletin concerning COVID-19 in anticipation of spring break travel
6 Mar 2020	Task force for COVID-19 preparedness announced and priorities described
10 Mar 2020	Spring break extended one week (from 3/15 to 3/22) and one week of remote instruction added (residences closed through 3/28)
13 Mar 2020	Adjustments to remote work policy announced. Town Hall / Video Conference scheduled for 3/16
16 Mar 2020	Extension of remote instruction for the remainder of the semester. <a href="#">Community Town Hall</a> conducted with primarily virtual attendance for the first time
17 Mar 2020	Student belongings can remain on campus until May
19 Mar 2020	Adjustments made to health insurance. Symptom checks recommended for employees not working remotely. <a href="#">Online video message from President Decatur</a> . Social media channels engaged for community building.
23 Mar 2020	Guidelines for work during disruption announced
30 Mar 2020	Guidelines for tuition and financial aid announced
31 Mar 2020	Honors Day moved to livestream and Commencement postponed. Grading policy changes (P/D/F opt out) announced
1 April 2020	Comprehensive review of policies for students released, including grading, room/board credits, living expense and emergency grants, technology provision, student employment continuance, counseling
13 April 2020	Summer programs canceled or moved online
24 April 2020	Affirmative update from President Decatur to families
1 May 2020	Communication to employees on phased re-opening during summer
7-8 May 2020	Announcement of online celebration for Class of 2020
3 June 2020	Announcement of temporary test-optional policy in Admissions

## Summer 2020: Formalizing actions

14 May 2020	Employee open forum announcing summer COVID-19 work protocols and describing preparations for the fall. Also announced flat salaries and suspension of retirement contributions. Invited questions for followup forum in a week
20 May 2020	Follow-up employee forum. Employee working groups subsequently organized around specific aspects of campus and employee life.
26 May 2020	Communication to families: Engagement with local and state expertise, development of campus community resources; affirm both science-based response and commitment to residential education; openness, creativity and hope.
15 June 2020	Family update announcing family forum on June 18: Guiding principles, Academic Calendar, Move-in, Testing/tracing/Isolation, Academics, Athletics, Accommodations
17 June 2020	COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund announced, along with invitation for financial aid requests
18 June 2020	<a href="#">Family Forum</a>
19 June 2020	Return to Campus Protocols (RTCP) for employees initial release
14 July 2020	Fall semester cohort plans announced: FY, Soph, Transfers in fall; Juniors and Seniors in spring; all single rooms; 10% tuition reduction. Calendar published. Remote/hybrid instruction efforts in full swing.
15 July 2020	<a href="#">Student and Family Forum</a>
30 July 2020	Update on fall prep, appreciation, and “staying nimble”

## Fall 2020: Semester under threat (eight student cases total)

13 Aug 2020	Kenyon College Commitment released, and publication of RTCP and Student Conduct Addendum announced to community
14 Aug 2020	RTCP publicized to employees, Everlywell tests sent to employees, dashboard announced for future
20 Aug 2020	Response to and memo shared with Child and Elder Care Working Group. Most recommendations met in RTCP.
17-24 Aug 2020	Students arrive under “quiet period.” <a href="#">Dashboard published</a> , updated every weekday. Isolation housing in Comfort Inn.
1 Sept 2020	Weekly dashboard updates/emails begin. COVID-19 Alert Levels introduced
5 Sept 2020	Quiet period and intensive testing complete. Testing one quarter of students each week.
10 Sept 2020	First positive test on campus announced and contextualized: not an active case but a left over from prior infection

10 Oct 2020	Alert level moved to moderate based on wastewater and Knox County increase in cases
24 Oct 2020	First real positive on campus. Moderate alert level extended and all students and employees test
28 Oct 2020	Alert level returns to low
2 Nov 2020	Spring plans update with sophomores remaining on campus
6 Nov 2020	Classes canceled for one day (mental health)
14 Nov 2020	Moderate alert level due to rise in cases both locally and nationally through end of resident semester 11/25
17 Nov 2020	Classes on 11/23-11/24 to be offered remotely to make travel as flexible as possible
25 Nov 2020	Residential semester ends, most students depart
18 Dec 2020	Semester ends: total of eight student cases reported

Spring 2021: Life under COVID (56 student cases total)

16 Dec 2020	Information sent to residential students in preparation for semester
15 Jan 2021	Kenyon College Commitment, Student Conduct Addendum, Campus protocols and dashboard information sent to students and families
4 Feb 2021	Spring classes begin under quiet period with Soph, Jun, and Seniors in residence. FY learning remotely.
12 Feb 2021	Kenyon partners with KPH to host vaccination clinic at the Lowry Center for eligible community members.  Quiet period extended to 2/28 due to the occurrence of 17 student positives in initial testing cohorts
22 Feb 2021	Quiet period ended due to very low positivity
26 Mar 2021	Alert level moved to moderate and quiet period introduced with comprehensive testing in response to rising positives
8 April 2021	Kenyon and KPH host vaccination clinic at Lowry Center for students
9 Apr 2021	Quiet period ends
20 Apr 2021	Vaccination requirement announced for students on campus in Summer 2021 and for the 21/22 academic year
14 May 2021	Announcement that not only will 403(b) contributions be restored, but lost contributions will be recouped. Mask mandate lifted outdoors

27 May 2021	RTCP altered to allow fuller campus, while the value of remote work was still recognized
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### Fall 2021: Towards living with COVID (235 student cases total)

8 Aug 2021	New CDC guidance on delta transmission and high levels in Knox County precipitate move to indoor masking
11 Aug 2021	New <a href="#">campus protocols</a> released
22 Aug 2021	Convocation of first-year students and first student case reported
1 Sept 2021	Rapid rise in student cases precipitates universal masking, takeout dining, and expanded mandatory testing
10 Sept 2021	Outbreak continues and cases exceed isolation capacity at Comfort Inn and the Pines in Apple Valley. In-room isolation for the first time
30 Sept 2021	Campus Activity Levels introduced to provide clear guidelines that can change dynamically. Campus at Level 2.
4 Nov 2021	Campus moved to Level 1 after several weeks of low case numbers
17 Nov 2021	Vaccine clinic (initial dose, booster, and flu) at Lowry Center
28 Nov 2021	Return from Thanksgiving with re-entry testing and Level 3
3 Dec 2021	Campus at Level 1
21 Dec 2021	Communication about spring notes likelihood of rapid spread of omicron variant, forecasting possibility of even more cases than in the fall. Plans for entry testing and modified Level 3 start

### Spring 2022: Living with COVID (355 student cases total)

6 Jan 2022	Guidance to campus community. Level 3 start with entry testing. Classes can begin remotely at discretion of instructor
13 Jan 2022	Isolation reduced from 10 to 5 days on CDC guidance. Comfort Inn still being used
17 Jan 2022	Classes begin
21 Jan 2022	Rapid antigen tests (BDVeritor) introduced: 1 per student per week
26 Jan 2022	Campus to Level 2
9 Feb 2022	Campus to Level 1 and individual contact tracing suspended
16 Feb 2022	Campus to Level 2 with surge in student cases. Off-campus isolation capacity exceeded and in-room isolation begins

3 Mar 2022	In response to new CDC COVID Community Levels, campus activity Level 0 is introduced (masks not mandated). Changes keyed to Community Levels in Knox County and on campus.
16 Mar 2022	Return from spring break at Level 0. No mandatory entry testing.
30 Mar 2022	Campus levels very low but acknowledge potential for future ups and downs