

OAAA E-Weekly Newsletter

Office of African American Affairs

January 10, 2022

Special Announcement

To the University Community:

We are writing with an update about the upcoming semester. First, and most importantly, we want to make it clear that the University's Spring 2022 semester will begin as planned – which means no changes to move-in dates or the start of courses, and that the default for all courses will be in-person. In-person instruction is a core part of our mission as an institution and UVA public health experts have advised us that classroom spaces are low-risk environments for infection.

That said, in response to a significant global spike in COVID-19 cases as a result of the omicron variant, and based on the advice of our public health experts, we believe additional measures are necessary to reduce the spread of the virus and to start our spring semester as safely as possible.

The two changes we are announcing are:

We are moving up the deadline for UVA Academic Division students, faculty and staff, and students in the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing, to upload proof of a booster shot from Feb. 1, 2022 to Jan. 14, 2022. UVA Health, including School of Medicine and School of Nursing faculty and staff, will continue with the Feb. 1, 2022 deadline.

Faculty teaching this term with extenuating health circumstances may request a temporary exception to begin their teaching this semester remotely, a practice followed in January-Term. The provost will provide additional information about this in the coming days.

We have changed the booster deadline because our public health experts are concerned that a spike in serious COVID-19 cases at the start of the semester could strain health care resources and University isolation and quarantine space. By pulling this booster deadline forward, we will ensure that the highest number of UVA community members possible are as protected as they can be from COVID-19 infection, serious illness and hospitalization as the in-person semester gets underway. In addition to the protection boosters provide against infection and serious illness, CDC guidance states that those who are boosted do not need to quarantine if they are a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19. This means the accelerated requirement will also preserve University quarantine space and enable more students, staff and faculty to continue learning and working without disruption.

Moving the booster deadline is an alternative to delaying the in-person semester until the current omicron-driven rise in cases subsides. A residential academic experience is an essential part of what it means to attend the University of Virginia, and we know how important it is to our students, faculty and staff to start the semester together in person.

Booster shots are widely available all over the country. For those who have not yet received their booster shots, the Blue Ridge Health District offers many opportunities across Central Virginia to get boosted.

In order to meet this requirement, UVA students attending in the spring 2022 semester must upload proof of an approved booster shot to HealthyHoos no later than Jan. 14. Those who are not eligible to receive their booster by Jan. 14, 2022 must submit proof of their booster no later than 30 days following their first day of eligibility.

Faculty and staff will also be required to upload proof of an approved booster no later than Jan. 14, 2022. UVA Human Resources will provide additional instructions on how to upload into Workday no later than Jan. 10. More information on this requirement for employees is available [here](#).

If you previously received a medical or religious exemption from the University's vaccine requirement, you do not need to take any further action, other than to continue complying with testing requirements and other public health policies. More information on exemptions for students is available [here](#). Employees who have never requested a religious or medical exemption or whose circumstances have changed since their first exemption request can submit a request [here](#). Please note that a recent case of COVID-19 does not qualify as grounds for a medical exemption.

As mentioned above, faculty with extenuating health circumstances may request to begin the semester remotely. We will provide faculty with additional information as soon as possible, and no later than early next week. Staff with extenuating health circumstances should work with their supervisor.

As always, we will continue to monitor the public health conditions and the virus and make additional adjustments as necessary. We are all tired of this virus, but we must remain both vigilant and flexible in order to strike the appropriate balance – as best we can – between public health and safety measures and fulfilling our core missions of residential teaching, research and medical care. For that reason, in addition to changing the date by which boosters are required, we are also evaluating the University's current policies on teleworking, events and gatherings, and other considerations that could help us keep the virus at bay this spring. We will provide an update on any changes to those policies by the end of next week.

Thank you, as always, for your patience and perseverance in the midst of challenging circumstances. We are eager to see all of you soon as we kick off another semester together on Grounds.

Sincerely,

Jim Ryan
President

Liz Magill
Provost

J.J. Davis
Chief Operating Officer

K. Craig Kent, M.D.
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, University of Virginia
Chief Executive Officer, UVA Health

OAAA Announcements & Services

OAAA Tutoring for Spring 2022 – (will resume the first week of February 2022)

Black Fridays - (will return in January 2022)

2022-2023 Peer Advisor Application is now available

The application deadline for the OAAA Peer Advisor Program is Friday, January 28, 2022 at 11:59 pm. Late applications will not be accepted.

We look forward to reading your applications!

What Is the Peer Advisor Program?

[Apply Now to be a 2022-2023 Peer Advisor](#)

Nationally recognized for "exemplary practice in achieving campus diversity," the Peer Advisor Program was

established by the University of Virginia's Office of African-American Affairs in 1984. It assists Black first-year and entering transfer students with their college transition by providing personalized, sensitive support and counseling. In addition, the program offers a wide range of activities from orientation to workshops and seminars to academic recognitions.

What is a Peer Advisor?

DESCRIPTION OF A PEER ADVISOR

Peer Advisors are a select group University of Virginia second-, third-, and fourth-year students chosen to serve as mentors and advisors to the entering class of first-year and transfers students throughout their first-year at the University. All Peer Advisors undergo an extensive training to ensure they are prepared to assist entering students with common issues faced by new students to the University. [To learn more](#)

Quote of the Week

“I am not lucky. You know what I am? I am smart, I am talented, I take advantage of the opportunities that come my way and I work really, really hard. Don’t call me lucky. Call me a badass.” – Shonda Rhimes, Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand In the Sun and Be Your Own Person

Quote's Corner



[Shonda Lynn Rhimes](#) (born January 13, 1970) is an American television producer, screenwriter, author, and mother. Rhimes was born in Chicago, Illinois, is the youngest of six children. She is best known as the showrunner—creator, head writer, and executive producer—of the television medical drama *Grey's Anatomy*, its spin-off *Private Practice*, and the political thriller series *Scandal*. Rhimes has also served as the executive producer of the ABC television series *Off the Map*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *The Catch*, and *Grey's* spin-off *Station 19*. In 2007 and 2021, Rhimes was named by *Time* on the *Time 100*, their annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. In 2015, she published her first book, a memoir, *Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun, and Be Your Own Person*. In 2017, Netflix said that it had entered into a multi-year development deal with Rhimes, by which all of her future productions will be Netflix Original series. Netflix had already

purchased the streaming rights to past episodes of Grey's Anatomy and Scandal. As of October 2020, she was working on more than 12 projects for Netflix, including the period drama Bridgerton. In April 2017, Rhimes joined the national board of Planned Parenthood. In 2019, Shonda joined the organization When We All Vote as a co-chair. This organization was founded to get out the vote prior to the 2020 general election.

This Week in Black History



Did you know? **It has been 65 years since the tragic murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till.** An anthology series to highlight a different piece of American history every season, [“Women of the Movement”](#) first follows Mamie Till-Mobley, whose 14 year-old son Emmett became a national flashpoint upon his brutal murder in 1955. After his death, Till-Mobley became a prominent civil rights figure in her own right. “Women of the Movement,” premiered Thursday, January 6 at 8:00 pm on ABC (episodes airing on Hulu as well), written by Marissa Jo Cerar, and directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, Tina Mabry, Julie Dash and Kasi Lemmons, this first season of “Women of the Movement” does all it can to imbue Emmett Till and his mother with the kind of humanity they have long been denied. The story portrays the birth, death, and afterlife of Emmett Till through the eyes of Mamie, the wider Black community mourning him, and the white Mississippians who couldn’t see him as anything other than a threat.



Did you know? **John David Washington comes from Hollywood royalty as the son of actress Pauletta Washington and two-time Academy Award winner Denzel Washington.** [John David](#) (born July 28, 1984) is an American actor, producer, and former American football running back. He played college football at Morehouse College and signed with the St. Louis Rams as an undrafted free agent in 2006. Professionally, Washington spent four years as the running back for the United Football League's Sacramento Mountain Lions. Washington shifted to an acting career. He was part of the main cast of the HBO comedy series Ballers (2015–2019). His breakthrough came playing Ron Stallworth in Spike Lee's 2018 crime film BlackKkKlansman, for which he received both Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations. In 2020, he starred in Christopher Nolan's science fiction action-thriller film Tenet, for which he won the Saturn Award for Best Actor. Washington starred alongside Zendaya as the titular character in the drama film Malcolm & Marie (2021).