



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

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December 6th, 2021

Dr. Santa Ono
President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia

Dr. President Ono,

In my role as Deputy Provincial Health Officer, I would like to thank and congratulate UBC for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing commitment to creating healthy and supportive environments for faculty, staff, and students.

At this time in British Columbia, 91% of the population 12 years and older have received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and 84.7% have received their second dose. Immunization is now available to children aged 5-11. The high immunization coverage in BC means that as we enter respiratory season, all indicators of the impact of COVID-19 on our population are declining.

Immunization is by far the most effective preventive measure against COVID-19; in settings with high immunization coverage, regular screening of those who do not have symptoms is likely to offer little additional benefit and is not routinely recommended. Fortunately, immunization coverage on both UBC campuses is very high. This has resulted in a rate of transmission on campus that is very low, and well below transmission rates in the surrounding communities.

Between the beginning of the term and December 1st, 2021, the Medical Health Officers from Interior Health reported 26 cases of Covid-19 infections among students, faculty and staff on the UBC Okanagan campus. Similarly, Medical Health Officers in Vancouver Coastal Health reported 207 diagnoses of COVID-19 among all post-secondary faculty, staff and students in the region up to the end of November. This means that in both regions less than 0.2% of all faculty, staff and students were diagnosed with COVID-19 since the beginning of September 2021. It is important to keep in mind that most infections among the university community are not acquired on campus, but in the home or through social networks. Despite that, faculty, staff and students were diagnosed with COVID-19 at half the rate of the surrounding community in Vancouver Coastal Health, and one tenth the rate in Interior Health, where community transmission was higher during this period.

The fall term has demonstrated that in the context of high immunization coverage, both UBC campuses operated with very low risk of COVID-19 transmission on campus. If at this time the university wishes to discontinue point of care screening of unimmunized faculty, staff and students, it is safe and appropriate to do so. Medical Health Officers and their public health teams will continue to carefully monitor COVID-19 in their regions and work with the UBC community to respond as needed.

Thank you again for working with public health during this challenging time for the benefit of the entire university community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Réka Gustafson MD FRCPC
Vice President, Public Health and Wellness, Provincial Health Services Authority &
Deputy Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia