

## Revised Reopening Plan

This revision is effective July 1, 2021 and is subject to change.

Governor Lujan Grisham announced June 18, 2021 that effective July 1, 2021, the state of New Mexico will forego COVID restrictions (masks, social distancing) statewide as the state is reaching the necessary minimum vaccination rate of 60%. Reaching a vaccination rate of 60% or above is believed to assist in forming herd immunity and dramatically reduce the rate of COVID-19 in our communities. Further, with most variants and mutations of COVID-19, it is widely believed that the vaccination may lessen the severity of the mutant COVID-19 and/or prevent the spread of the variant versions. Therefore a 60% vaccination rate is very important and has led the reduction of precautionary and restrictive measures. Even if you have had COVID, the vaccination is still very important because the immunity as a result of having had COVID is only temporary, and the vaccination will bolster and return immunity. Receiving the vaccination is critical to the community and to prevent the continued spread and allows reopening of Quay County and Mesalands Community College to a life of the pre-COVID era.

**However, it is very important to note that Quay County is among the lowest five counties in New Mexico for vaccination rates. It has been reported that in Quay County only 37.2% of the eligible residents are vaccinated and of Quay County residents 18-24 years old the rate is only 11% vaccinated indicating that approximately 9 out of 10 young, college-age Quay County residents are unvaccinated. However, returning to “normal” at the college means returning to open classrooms and does not demand that all courses be instructed online, however, distance learning will remain an option for some courses.**

For this reason, we are deeply concerned for the health of our students, staff, and community. We want to prevent an isolated outbreak of COVID in Quay County and are **strongly encouraging** our unvaccinated campus community (and vaccinated community who feel safer) to voluntarily continue wearing a mask and maintain social distancing and, most importantly, **get vaccinated**. We believe strongly it is in the best interest for the health of our community that we continue to target the 60% vaccination rate in Quay County and at Mesalands. At the present, we are very far from that goal while much of the state is well ahead and able to relax restrictions safely and live life without fear.

Mesalands will hold regular vaccination events for the students, employees, and the community to combat the dangerously low vaccination rate. You are **strongly encouraged** to be fully vaccinated prior to returning to college in the fall. Mesalands will continue to observe the orders of the Governor and recommendations of the New Mexico Department of Higher Education and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If the recommendations change, Mesalands will promptly revise our operational plans.

The additional benefits of becoming vaccinated for faculty, staff, and students remain in place at Mesalands. For faculty and staff, you may confidentially and voluntarily show your vaccination card to the Human Resources Specialist and **you will be given extra day of vacation**. For students, you may voluntarily show your card to Student Affairs and you will **receive a gift card for the college bookstore and two tickets to the Dinosaur Museum**. Further, if an employee or student receives the vaccination and experiences any side effects (which may occur but are typically very mild), Mesalands will award, at no cost the employees sick leave, one additional day per vaccination in the days following the injection and students will be awarded one day per vaccination of an excused absence for class attendance.