

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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British Columbia's Research Universities Working Toward Enhancing COVID-19 Response with Vaccination and Rapid Testing

Victoria, BC – August 26, 2021 – BC's research universities welcome the recent provincial government announcements on mandatory masks and a proof of vaccine program, which have been key concerns within our communities as we plan for a full return to campus in September. We have continued to advance toward resolution to those concerns in our discussions with the provincial government and public health officials, while at the same time being cognizant of the need to provide choice for community members.

While we are well aware that a significant majority of our campus community have already been vaccinated and all safety precautions are in place for the September start, we are also working with public agencies toward offering our own additional measures for educational activities beyond those covered by the provincial proof of vaccine program, including rapid testing for our community members who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19, or who choose not to disclose their vaccine status.

We recognize that we need to allow for a transition period to give all community members an opportunity to access vaccinations. Developing and implementing this initiative will require ongoing dialogue with students, faculty and staff associations and unions.

We are confident that these additional measures will augment the already high numbers who have been vaccinated. Recent surveys of students, staff and faculty at several institutions have revealed very high vaccination rates, which give confidence as we enter the academic year.

To all community members, we strongly recommend that you become vaccinated before returning to campus. As a reminder, in BC, vaccines are available to everyone aged 12 and older, including students arriving from international destinations, who can receive their vaccinations after arriving in Canada. You can learn more at <https://immunizebc.ca>.

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RUCBC represents the interests of BC's research universities, identifying issues facing the institutions, providing system wide leadership in the development of relevant public policy and communicating on behalf of the university system. RUCBC also provides a coordinating forum for its members and acts as a provincial focal point for working with the Government of British Columbia and provincial or national bodies associated with universities.