UALBANY BUILDING VENTILATION AND COVID-19 SAFETY
June 24, 2022

UAlbany’s facilities staff is comprised of engineers, architects, and building operations professionals whom have been integral contributors on scores of COVID-19 campus, SUNY-wide, and national task forces and planning groups. Best practices and continually emerging guidance regarding mechanical and ventilation systems have been, and will continue to be followed, including guidance provided by the CDC, the State of New York, the World Health Organization, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

While ventilation is not capable of addressing all aspects of infection control, modification and upgrades to HVAC systems, where necessary, combined with wearing a mask, physical distancing, and hand-washing will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Generally, with respect to HVAC, increasing outside air into interior spaces and improving filtration of recirculated air are the primary mechanical ventilation objectives to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Accordingly, UAlbany’s facilities staff have been hard at work to achieve the following:

MECHANICAL SYSTEM OPERATIONAL CHANGES
• Building air systems have been modified to run two hours after the building is closed to increase air exchanges.
• Residential housing mechanical systems will run 24/7 as will elevator and restroom exhaust fans.
• Outside air will be increased into spaces where practicable, sometimes to the detriment of heating and cooling.

FILTRATION UPGRADES
• University buildings are currently set to bring in 100% outside air and/or use MERV-11 or MERV-13, many with secondary pre-filtration.
• Portable HEPA filtration units have been deployed in select spaces with no mechanical ventilation or limited ventilation/filtration to meet COVID-19 air quality guidelines.

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS BUILDINGS
• Most Downtown Campus buildings and spaces have mechanical ventilation systems with outside air and MERV-11 filters, however, selected spaces in Milne and Draper do not.
• For most of these Milne and Draper spaces, Facilities has deployed mobile air filtration units, with HEPA filters designed to circulate and purify air.

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