

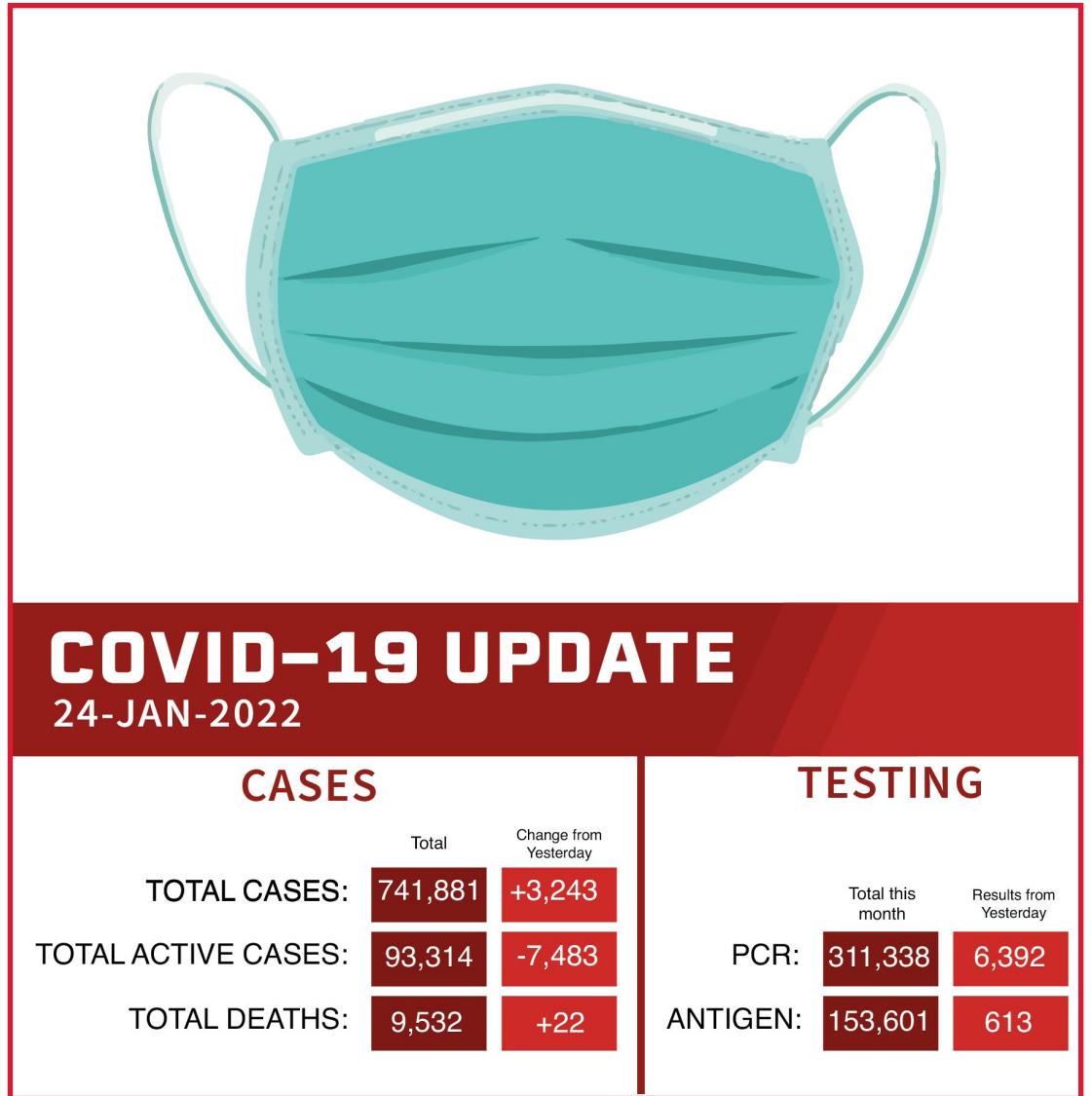
Arkansas State University Updates COVID-19 policies New variant Omicron causes cases to continue to rise in Craighead County

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Arkansas State University Chancellor Dr. Kelly Dampousse sent out a campus wide email on Jan. 10 for reminders and recommendations of COVID-19 the Spring 2022 semester. In Dampousse's previous Dec. 31 email it was said that A-State's Emergency Operations Committee met over the break to recommend adoption of new Center of Disease Control's guidelines for quarantine as well as recommending keeping the indoor masking policy in place. The new CDC recommended guidelines for quarantine and isolation include people who test positive but are asymptomatic and stay quarantined for five days. Quarantine should be followed by five days of wearing masks around others. The shorter quarantine period is for people who do not experience any symptoms of COVID-19. For those who have been exposed to COVID-19 and are unvaccinated or six months out from their second dose or two-months after Johnson & Johnson without boosters should spend five days in quarantine and wear a mask

around others for five days. For people who are fully vaccinated no quarantine is required but they should wear a mask around others for 10 days. In the state of Arkansas COVID-19 related deaths have risen to 9,556 as of Tuesday, Jan. 25. The Arkansas Center of Health Improvement issued a call to action on January 7 for Arkansas to recognize the dangers of variant of concern Omicron. Fully vaccinated people can spread Omicron variant to others as well as catch it themselves. Omicron spreads more easily than other variants including Delta. In an email sent to all students, faculty and staff Dampousse said: "I continue to urge everyone to consider vaccination and boosters. All the evidence supports vaccination leading to better health outcomes, even if you become infected with COVID-19." Masks are required anywhere social distancing can not take place. Including hallways, elevators, places in the student union etc. Classes will still continue to meet in person but masks will be required. Also stated in email Dampousse said "We continue

to monitor cases in our city, county, and on campus. When conditions improve, we will revise these campus guidelines. I am encouraged by the reports from other countries where the omicron variant spread rapidly, but then also declined rapidly." For the freshman class, all they know is attending college with a mask mandate. Lawson Davis, a freshman nursing major, said he sees the use for the continuation of the mask mandate but it is not being followed as intended. "I feel like it hasn't been even last semester," Davis said. "I feel like at this point it's already kind of like an optional choice because it's not enforced in public settings like the union." Nathan Hartley freshman finance major likes the mask mandate despite him being vaccinated. "It gives a little extra safety," Hartley said. "I haven't gotten covid." It is still asked by A-State that if you have any COVID-19 symptoms, have been tested or exposed to self report on the Arkansas State official website. After self reporting a member of the A-State health team will reach out with further information or instruction.



Graphic by Monica Gerges | Graphic Design Editor
The numbers shown on the graphic above reflect the state or Arkansas's COVID-19 data as of Tuesday, Jan. 25.

The Yard offers students a new dining experience set to open Feb. 15



JONATHAN SCHAUFLER
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New dining options will be coming to the A-State community within the next two weeks. The Yard, a multicuisine restaurant, is set to open approximately Feb. 15. Being built on Aggie Road, The Yard is designed to accommodate the A-State community needs. "We have built five venues near campus. Students are now within walking distance to be able to come here and enjoy this environment," Tuan Le, a partner in real estate and operations of The Yard, said. Le emphasized the importance of transportation for college students. If students want any other food than what the campus has to offer, they must drive to get there. However, with The Yard they are within walking distance of five different options. Currently dining options are BA Burrito (Mexican cuisine), Larry's Pizza, Saigon Noodles (Asian cuisine), Shadrachs Coffee Roasting

Co. and a fully stocked bar. A place solely built for students is what the owners of The Yard have intended for their project. "For the folks living on campus, how can they walk over and have a place between class before class and after class. Somewhere that gives them a place to eat and socialize," Gary Harpole, Real Estate manager, a part of the Halsey Thrasher Harpole group, of The Yard said. "That is where this whole idea was born. What can we do to enhance life on campus, even though we are off campus just by proximity?" A major question surrounding The Yard for the A-State community is are students going to be able to use their flex dollars as payment? As of right now, students will not be able to. This is a hope for the owners of The Yard and will possibly be available sometime in the future. Operating hours for The Yard is currently going to be seven days a week, with staggered opening times. Shadrachs will open at its usual time of 6 a.m. with the rest of the venues

opening around 10:30 a.m. The whole building and all venues will close around 10:30 p.m. Food is not the only thing The Yard hopes to draw business in with. Future plans involve a possible DJ playing in the nighttime. When warmer weather comes there will be an outdoor stage for live music, attendees can spread blankets out and bring chairs or simply sit in any of the outdoor seating. Not only is The Yard bringing food and entertainment opportunities for the A-State community but job opportunities as well. The Yard is currently hiring and can accommodate student schedules. For anyone wishing to apply, need only apply in person at The Yard. A business built with the intention of supporting the A-State community. With the approximate opening day of Feb. 15, The Yard is getting ready and putting finishing touches on the building. With many food and entertainment options, the owners of The Yard hope that this building can add to on-campus life.

Photos by Jacob Keene | Copy Editor
The Yard will contain five different venues for customers to choose from.