

Halloween Safety and Awareness: Context & Things to Think About

Costumes:

- With Halloween approaching, you either have a costume ready or need to pick something out soon!
- You need a costume to match how creative and amazing you are. A costume to impress your friends. As members of the College of Charleston community, we hope you'll also weigh one more factor when choosing what to wear – does your costume perpetuate cruel stereotypes that are harmful to other people? If so, we ask that you think twice and be respectful.
- Why is it offensive? College of Charleston has diverse students, faculty and staff representing many different cultures and backgrounds – that's one of the best parts about our community! We have an opportunity to learn with and from people who may not look like us, believe the same things we do, or share one history and culture. Along with that diversity comes a need for all of us to respect different cultural (including gender identity and expression, disability, ethnicity, race, and religious) backgrounds to create a campus that is safe and welcoming for all people.
- “We’re a Culture, Not a Costume” is a nationwide campaign initiated by students at Ohio University. Here at the College we are asking you to THINK FIRST.
- If you're not sure whether your costume crosses a line, just remember this: It is NEVER acceptable to paint your face any color to represent another race or culture.
- How to differentiate between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation... ask yourself the following questions: “Am I reducing this to a fashion statement? Are people of this culture the ones who are profiting off of this? Am I in an environment where this is appropriate?”
- Turning someone's culture into a costume may seem harmless, but, making fun of someone's identity or culture perpetuates harmful stereotypes, and makes people of different races and identities feel unwelcome and unsafe at the College of Charleston.
- It does not matter if you deliberately set out to mock an entire group of people or if it happens by accident because you didn't know your costume was offensive. Even if the intent is not to bring harm or insult, it may do just that. Which means the impact of that harm is much more significant than the intention behind the costume choice.

Safety and Well-Being:

- In addition to focusing on costume choices that promote the safety and well-being of others, we also want to promote other safety messaging around student health, bystander intervention, and watching out for each other.
- Make your cloth face-covering part of your costume... but remember a costume mask is not a substitute for a cloth face-covering.
- Indoors and outdoors, you are more likely to spread COVID-19 when you are in close proximity with others for a long time. Maintain appropriate social distance space of at least 6ft.
- Wash your hands frequently and for at least 20-seconds with warm water and soap! Bring hand sanitizer with you at all times!
- Back on the Bricks guidelines still apply during Halloween. Do not host or attend social gatherings in groups of more than 10. Face-coverings are required on-campus and in the City of Charleston.

Promote These Messages!

- Share our video which addresses these aspects of safety and well-being:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeaTlvfpMk>
- This Halloween. **#respectyourfellowcougars**

Remember...

- Respect where we live.
- Respect where we learn.
- Respect our Community.
- Respect yourself.
- Respect your fellow Cougars.

In addition, remember to live the College's values:

- Diversity
- Community
- Integrity
- Academic Excellence
- Liberal Arts Education
- Respect for the Individual Student

- Public Mission

Remind each other of the *Cougar Commitment* to uphold, honor, and promote these values.

Remind each other of the *Cougar Pledge* to keep our campus community safe during COVID-19.