

# Fall Planning Update: Returning Students & Families Webinar 1 Transcript

**Katharine Pei:** Hi. Welcome, everyone. My name is Katharine Pei, and I want to welcome you to our discussion about updating the fall calendar. I am the Director of the First Year Center, and tonight, I am joined by my colleagues and senior leadership from the Division of Student Affairs and the College of Arts and Sciences who I will introduce shortly. I want to warn you there is a pretty bad storm going through St. Louis right now. Thunder keeps crashing right outside my window, so if you hear a loud bang, that is not my child, that is the storm. If any of us get cut out, I think there are enough panelists on here who will be able to stay on and keep answering questions, but we have a little bit of [inaudible] coming at us right now.

So we are so excited that you've chosen to join us for tonight's conversation. Some information before we get started, other than weather, is first, I want to make sure you know how to submit questions during this webinar. If you are joining us via Zoom, you will notice that we've given you the ability to ask questions via the Q&A feature that you'll see at the bottom of your screen. If you are watching live through YouTube, I invite you to email questions to [families@wustl.edu](mailto:families@wustl.edu). Some of our professional staff within the Division of Student Affairs are helping to field these questions, so you may see some panelists who have a shield photo or a picture of themselves, and it says Student Affairs. Those folks are, on the backend, helping us to answer questions and move them into a screen that I know what to read to you all. And so we will answer questions that we find applicable to this group as a whole on the webinar. If you have a more nuanced or personal question, we may answer that via email next week. And if you're using that Q&A feature, you may see us dismiss some of your questions. It's one of the little options. Note, that doesn't mean we're not going to ask your questions, but it means that we're moving that onto this other screen that I'm reading from. And so we will get to your question. We're just moving it off the Q&A screen. So for those on Zoom, let's go ahead and make sure you know how to use that Q&A feature. If you could share where you are watching this webinar from, we're going to name a couple of those places on air. And then lastly, we are recording this webinar, and next week, we will upload it to the [families.wustl.edu](http://families.wustl.edu) website. So before I pass this along to the panelists, I want to share some of the places people are joining us from. We have folks joining in from Chicago, Illinois, Hawaii, San Diego, someone who is joining us from across a great body of water in Hong Kong, and so thank you all so much for being with us tonight. And now, since I know what you really want to hear is from my colleagues, I'm going to ask each of them to introduce themselves, beginning with Ms. Kawanna Leggett. And then once those introductions are complete, Dr. Rob Wild and Dean Jennifer Smith will share some information and reflections on the chancellor's message yesterday.

**Kawanna Leggett:** Hello, everyone. My name is Kawanna Leggett, and I'm currently the Executive Director for Residential Life and will assume the role of Dean of Students on June 1st.

**Katharine Pei:** Sorry. I was just told my mic's cutting in and out. Dr. Kirk Dougher, could you introduce yourself?

**Kirk Dougher:** Certainly. Welcome, everyone. Glad to have you with us this evening. My name is Kirk Dougher. I am the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health and Wellbeing in Student Affairs. I oversee several departments including Habif Medical, Habif Mental Health, Health Promotion, our pharmacy, Relationship and Sexual Violence, and our office called WashU Cares.

**Katharine Pei:** And Dr. Rob Wild.

**Rob Wild:** Hello, everybody. Thank you for being with us. My name is Rob Wild. In the musical chairs that Kawanna just announced with her title changing, I am the current Dean of Students until Kawanna takes over for me on Monday. I am going to be serving as the Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs starting on Monday and will have oversight for many of the programs and activities that serve our students, including Housing and Residential Life, Athletics, and many others.

**Katharine Pei:** And then Dean Jen Smith.

**Jen Smith:** Hi. Jen Smith, I'm the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and I'm here representing my colleagues in the undergraduate academic divisions.

**Katharine Pei:** So Rob and Jen, would you like to share some reflections on Chancellor Martin's announcement regarding the fall semester?

**Rob Wild:** Sure. And I want to start again by thanking all of you for joining us. This call, again, we may have some new families on here, but I believe this call is mostly our returning families. And so you all know what a challenging year this has been. We appreciate your patience. We know this spring, having your students home with you for the last two and a half months has been unexpected. And while you may be getting tired of having them with you, we miss them terribly. And I have been trying to figure out how we can get them out of your houses and back to St. Louis and to us here at Washington University. Both Dean Jen Smith and I have been serving for the last month on something that is very excitingly called the Fall Contingency Planning Committee. But it's an extension of a group that's really been working for almost two months to think through all the various scenarios and risks with those scenarios related to the reopening of the Danforth Campus at Washington University. All of us on this call and all of us at Washington University have never experienced anything like the crisis that we have faced the last two and a half months, and the uncertainty and the challenges that we face ahead. And so this is all uncharted territory, and we're trying our best to make decisions that are guided by our knowledge and expertise of our campus operations, our academic programs, but also the great expertise we have here at Washington University, both from faculty whose careers have been dedicated to public health and infectious disease. I can tell you-- and looking at all of the models and predictors that you are all reading and seeing in the popular media as well as from things that we're looking at from the American College Health Association, the Center for Disease Control, or our own public health guidance here in St. Louis.

There is no clear and obvious path forward, which makes this work so challenging. All of you on this call have entrusted us with the safety and well-being of your students. This is something we take very, very seriously this responsibility, and that has made this decision very difficult. You learned from us yesterday--- you learned from the Chancellor that as a result of all of our deliberations and discussions, we made the decision-- first of all, I'm happy to say that we are going to open in person in the fall. That was a big relief for us to be able to get to that point. We also decided that for us, it was important to take a careful, deliberate, and cautious approach to opening, using the next two and a half months to learn, to plan, to anticipate, and to understand what the environment looks like and how we can create an environment for us that will minimize the likelihood of the spread of the Coronavirus on our campus. We believe this plan gives us the best chance for success to do this. I'm going to say a few words about how we're organizing on some of the operational side of this planning, and then I'm going to let Dean Smith talk a little bit about the academic side, which is a huge endeavor.

First of all, Kawanna and I have been talking, and we'll be leading a group along with some colleagues from dining-- around Housing and Dining Planning. This is one of the most challenging aspects of preparing for a residential experience. And we know we're going to take some questions on this call on

this webinar likely, and we'll address those later about a little bit of our thinking related to that planning. We do not have a decision yet on what that's going to look like. There's many models and recommendations for how we safely open a residential campus for density, related to the things called cohorting that I'm sure you're reading about and hearing about. In addition to housing, how we serve food. All of us have been experiencing different experiences at the grocery store, at restaurants. All those are going to transition here to the experience that our students, our faculty, and our staff have as they prepare for a dining experience on campus in the fall so that we can continue to serve the great food that we have here at Washington University, but to do so as safely as possible.

So planning area one is around housing and dining. The second very important plan that my colleague, Dr. Dougher, may be able to speak more about on this call if there are questions has to do with what we are calling monitoring and containment. We know for a fact that when we reopen, it's not going to be a matter of if we have a case of coronavirus at Washington University. It's going to be a matter of when. And we need to be carefully ready for that. We need to be able to have good testing on the ground and ready to go. We need to be able to have both quarantine and isolation housing options available for our students. And we need to have a well-defined set of policies and practices that will guide what we do to make sure that when those cases happen, we are managing them as well as possible. And then the last area that I'll talk about is called Danforth Campus events and programs. We'll discuss everything from our revised orientation program called Bear Beginnings, which we'll do a little bit differently this year for our new students to how we will work with our fall athletes and our programs there. How the libraries will function. What will the seating look like in the Danforth University Center? Can all the treadmills in the summer's Rec Center be next to each other in the way that they are now? All of the things that we need to do to modify our programs and our spaces to make sure that we are minimizing the likelihood for the spread of COVID-19. I will say, in all of this, for those of us on this call, your students are really our top priority. But as you think about campuses, we also have many other stakeholders. We have our staff, our great team of staff that work with your students. And we have our faculty who have their own concerns and challenges related to working with students. And so we're also doing a lot of planning on the academic side that I'll let Dean Smith talk about.

**Jen Smith:** Thank you so much. So the fourth big working group of our Fall Contingency Planning Committee, it's called Academic Programs. And that is where we are working to plan and ultimately deliver a high-quality educational experience that will work for students both in-person and remote. We want to build something that allows us to engage well with all of our students regardless of class size or format. And so part of what we have to do is very similar to what some of the other groups that Rob Wild was discussing. And that's looking at how we will use our classrooms, our teaching labs in an appropriate socially distanced manner. And so how do we need to engage with passing time between classes so that people don't crowd around entrances? Do we need to run more sections of things? How are we going to be able to make sure that our in-person classroom experiences are following all of the same best practices public health guidelines? And some things that are perhaps a little bit more particular to the educational experience, so we're talking about clear masks or face shields, particularly in language classes or performance classes where it's really important to be able to see somebody's mouth in how we're engaging. So we're thinking a lot about the particular educational applications of some of these safety guidelines. But then we're also thinking about supporting our faculty in designing customized experiences that work for their class material and allow for this flexibility in engagement, so we have a huge group of people that are working around faculty training and support. We learned a lot over this spring, some things that we want to do more of, some things that we want to make more consistent, but we're standing up a lot of resources to help our faculty think through how they're going to adjust their classes to work well both in-person and remotely. And so we're building that training and

beginning to roll out some of these training opportunities for our faculty this summer so that we can be really ready to hit the ground running once we get going in the fall.

We're also overhauling the technology we have available in our classrooms so that we can support remote engagement with our in-person classrooms and that students can hear and contribute and that we can make sure we're capturing and engaging with our students in the best possible manner. And we're also evaluating the technology needs that any of our students would have to be able to engage fully in the experience if they are participating remotely. We want to make sure that everybody has what they need to be able to connect and that we support our students to fully access the educational experiences that we're building. I mean, this is going to be complicated. It's not going to be one size fits all. We're going to work differently with large classes that present a little bit more of a social distancing challenge. So what we're really doing in training is supporting faculty to think about what is it that I'm doing in my class? Here are some ways you can get live discussion going. Here are some ways that you can break up a lecture into components. And really be deliberate about how we're offering our classes in a way that will work for all of our students. And then as much as we desperately wish we could go back to normal, there are opportunities in everything we're going through. And so we have another group that is actually looking at what can we do in this incredibly changing environment where we've got people participating from all over the world that we couldn't necessarily do in a traditional model? So we've asked our faculty to be creative about what new things we can offer our students, what new opportunities that are for our students to engage with the challenges of the day. We've got a lot going on in the world. There are a lot of challenges. How do we make sure that we are doing cool things? Besides getting us back to what we love about interacting with each other and being together and learning together, we want to make sure that we are really taking advantage of any opportunities that this hybrid format and having people participating remotely engages.

I might as well, since I'm talking, mention the most kind of crucial piece of the changed schedule, which is that by starting late. And we have a set number of weeks we have to have in the semester for accreditation purposes. That pushed our final exam period after the new year, which is something that is new for us. It's not necessarily new nationwide. When I was an undergrad, all four years, my final exams were after a holiday break. So I can promise you it is survivable and we're going to be working with faculty. One of the things that we're asking them to think about is to think about how they are staging their work over the course of the semester. We don't want people to leave too much to the very end. And so we're asking them to really think about not leaning too heavily on that final exam period to have too much there. I should mention as well, the intention is that anything happening during final exam period will be happening remotely. So people will be able to not be on campus after we finish classes. You don't have to come back until classes start again January 25th.

I believe that's right. Yes. So you will be able to be home away for more than a month and not have to travel back and forth to campus multiple times. And so hopefully, that helps a bit. We also didn't want-- I mean, you notice there's no fall break. One more instructional day over Thanksgiving time. And so trying to cram final exams into that already-compressed time would've been an incredible challenge. So we will be available to our students through break to have review sessions. The support will still be there if that's what people are looking for and we'll manage. So I know that's the biggest kind of noticeable challenge that we see associated with that different calendar.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you so much for that information. I would say the question that we have gotten the most, both in the Q&A box and pre-submitted, is about how we came to the decision about the calendar that we did. In the past week or so, we've seen many universities across the country announce their fall plans. Several of them are starting early and ending by Thanksgiving. WashU has chosen to take

a different route. Rob, perhaps you can talk about the decision and the factors that went into deciding to start the semester later than usual and then to bring students back after Thanksgiving break.

**Rob Wild:** Yeah. Thanks, Katharine. Again, this was one of the harder decisions that we had to make. And as I said in my opening comments, what is clear in looking at the data is that there is no clear path forward. And while we understand, we considered the option of doing an earlier start, we felt that the preparation that we needed to be ready for an earlier start would make the experience safer and having that extra time was important to us. The other thing I should mention, a lot of universities and a lot of the companies and places where you all are associated with, we are not back to normal at WashU whatsoever. We are still, as you can see, I'm sitting in my basement. We are still working from home, most of us are. The plan is not to begin to really bring faculty and staff back to campus in any consolidated effort until August and that's based, not just on the CDC guidance, but what the guidance is here in St. Louis in the St. Louis region. And so one of the things that we're doing, you might ask, "Well, why are you letting your law students and your social work students start on August 24th like normal?" Well, there's two reasons for that. One reason is they don't live in the residence halls. They are those two programs-- those students tend to live near campus in apartments and so that some of the challenges associated with residential living aren't there. But the other reason is it gives us a chance to gradually reopen the campus. Get our cleaning schedules figured out. Get our instructional, the things that Jen was talking about in terms of the instructional materials, those kinds of things.

And the Thanksgiving question is very difficult. And I will tell you, I have heard that question a lot in the last 24 hours, and there is no good answer for that, right. So the decision to continue over Thanksgiving raises the concern for many people that we are sending students home possibly to areas where there is a more likelihood of Coronavirus and then bringing them back on campus. A couple of things with that, one, we certainly will know by Thanksgiving what the national condition is, and what the recommendations are, what the treatments are, what the options are. It will be different than it was on March 11th in terms of our ability to prepare for the difficult environment.

And it is possible for every university that we will not be able to have the fall calendar that we are saying we're having this summer, and at any point, including, for Washington University at Thanksgiving, we may need to be prepared to move to an alternative instructional model. The other thing is, during a normal semester anyways, I will tell you, as you all know, our students are traveling all the time. Athletes, student groups, people going home who live close by. And so just the fact that Thanksgiving tends to be a time when a larger population of students are traveling home doesn't mean that we're not going to have new norms that we're going to have to establish as a community this fall. Not just for student travel but for faculty who are going to conferences. All of us are going to have to realize that the more we travel as a community the more likelihood it is that we're going to create a difficult environment here on campus.

So we may be asking students to consider staying on campus for the break this year. Not ideal certainly. I have children myself. One will be going to college in a year and I can feel for you about what that must feel like to send somebody off in September, and realize you're not going to see them for three months. But that's the environment we're living in right now where we may need to make some of these sacrifices as a group to be safer as a community. We did talk a lot about it and this is where we landed.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks for providing that additional insight, Rob. Kirk, I have a question for you, what considerations are being discussed to ensure the health and safety of the Washington community when we return to campus? Faculty, staff, students, guests?

**Kirk Dougher:** So there have been-- thank you, Katharine. There have been multiple committees that had been stood up to try and look at how we can ensure the safety of our students and faculty and guests. Anybody that comes to campus really. The Chancellor has been quite clear that our priority should be to lean towards making sure that people are safe. So there has been, as part of that fall contingency planning, several committees that are looking at things. In particular, the public health committee has scoured through the different documents that Rob mentioned at the beginning. CDC, American College Health Association, and a number of different perimeters that have been stood up by other states, other universities to make sure that we and our public health folks are very clear about what it is that we can do to make sure that our students are safe. So, Dean Smith talked about some of the strategies that might be employed in a classroom. In addition, we're looking to make sure that we are following the best-known science out there and making sure that our choices are based in empirically-based work to help our students. Secondarily to that committee, there's also a working group that's going to be looking at some of the things that Dr. Wild mentioned, which are the monitoring and the containment and quarantining of students. And so from those two committees, have come a lot of recommendations that will serve as guidance for some of our faculty members, a lot of our service provision, and certainly, our engagement with student activities and events. The university wants to make sure that we are safe with our students and trying to give them as much of the opportunities that we can to be able to have the true college experience. And so that it gets down into a great number of specificities, in terms of how people should be keeping themselves safe. And many of them would sound familiar to you if you were to compare them against what your local state and county governments are asking you to be able to do. However, some of them are a lot more complex when you try and think of how students are going to get in and out of the classroom, and how they might sit within certain spaces of each other and so forth and so on. Additionally, the last thing I'd like to be able to share is that the areas that have responsibility for taking care of our students' health, Habif Medical Services, in particular, are planning multiple scenarios on how they might be able to continue to serve the population. As Dr. Wild mentioned, we are anticipating cases of COVID on campus and we want to make sure that we have different entries in different service points for well student visits versus potential respiratory issues, versus all the sundry other things that we might be looking at. So suffice it to say, we have been planning all these different nuances to these schedules to be able to figure out and service provisions to be able to make sure that we can keep our students safe, healthy, and to be able to promote their academics at our utmost.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you, Kawanna. Lots of questions about Housing and Dining, which makes sense that's why our students live and eat. And so I'm going to ask kind of like a series of questions and then just answer the best that you can with what is available. So overall, what are you all thinking about in preparation to open the residence halls and dining in the fall? What does that look like for students who maybe share a bedroom or a bathroom? Are we going to allow guests in the residence hall? Just kind of maybe give a big picture about what you all are discussing to prepare students living in community.

**Kawanna Leggett:** Well, certainly when you think about the residential experience, it has always been based on community and bringing people together. And with COVID, we have to reimagine what that residential experience will be. And as my colleagues have said, we're doing a lot of scenario planning right now. I wish I could get on this call and give definitive here's what's going to happen. But clearly, our university is doing the right thing in terms of bringing great groups together to look at public health strategies around what it means to live in community, what it means to dine in community. And so there is a group of all contingency sub-group looking at housing and what it means to live together in terms of our occupancy strategies, what it means in terms of having guests, isolation spaces, and a number of other guidelines that we'll need to put in place before we open the residential communities. As the

Chancellor's message said, yesterday, we will have more definitive answers by July 31st. And that includes things like housing assignments, which we hope to get out by August 1st. And so, unfortunately, I don't have all the answers to that. But I will say that we will be working closely with our public health officials to ensure that the safety and security of our communities are at the forefront of our concerns as we bring students back to campus.

**Katharine Pei:** So Kawanna-

**Rob Wild:** -Can I just-

**Katharine Pei:** --because-- I'm sorry, [inaudible], can I just ask a question and then have you answer? All right, we're just talking over each other from different rooms. We're used to being in the same space. Kawanna, the follow up that I'm seeing to that is, you mentioned about housing assignments being available August 1st. The majority of the families on this call have current students, rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors who already have a housing assignment. Is there a possibility those might be adjusted in order to ensure the safety of the community?

**Kawanna Leggett:** So for the August 1st, that's for our incoming students. Typically housing assignments go out July 1st. And so given the new timeline, we will be extending that to August 1st. For our returning students, as you said, many of them already know their housing assignments. I will be honest that we'll need to look at occupancy and look at the density and see if we need to make any adjustments. And so we will be communicating very clearly with our students around that timeline. But currently, all our returning students, most of them, if they are not a part of a small group of undersized students, know where their housing assignments are right now. And so if there are any changes to that, we certainly will be communicating that to them before July 31st.

**Katharine Pei:** Rob, what were you going to add?

**Rob Wild:** I'm just going to say two things. First of all, I do want to thank Kawanna because what she and her team are doing right now is for many of you whose student belongings are still in the residence halls, they have been working around the clock since the stay at home orders were lifted in St. Louis county on May 18th to prepare a packing, shipping, and storage process so that we can make sure that your students' belongings are safely stored or shipped. And I know some of you may actually be coming back starting next week to come do that yourself. I also want to be clear about one of our planning principles because it gets overwhelming when you think about the challenge of density. We are starting from a point of-- we want to try to maintain the conditions as they are now and what are going to be the changes that we would need to make to be able to do that. I would guess that most of your students want to live with the people they picked to live with in the place that they picked, and we want that too. What it may mean is that we will have to make some changes in how common spaces are occupied, that there may have to be some limits. We may, as Kawanna said, have to change some of the guest policies. We may have to temporarily, for the fall semester, change our visitor policies on floors so that if you're meeting people, you're going out. You're wearing a mask. You're doing that in another part of campus versus going to other floors and seeing people. This is really a massive public health strategy. What's happening here is happening in all schools at all levels in all companies and we're trying to do our best to mirror what we know are the best public health principles in that way.

**Kawanna Leggett:** A couple of things. I see a lot of questions around move-in and what that will look like. We're also talking and modifying what our moving experience will be, and so there'll be additional information that comes out about that. The one thing I will say, I wish I could give more answers. We are in those scenario planning, but I do believe we have one of the best residential experiences in the country and our team is amazing. Our housekeeping team has been working non-stop since campus

shutdown on March 11th to ensure that we have clean and well-maintained spaces, and spaces are disinfected. And so know that that will continue and be a part of our planning process as we gather more data about what the actual occupancy and strategy will be over the course of the next couple of weeks. So very excited to be able to bring this team of people to really think thoroughly around how do we bring our students back safely in the residential halls.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Jen, you mentioned a little bit about the rationale about why exams are in January. I heard you explain about accreditation and you have to have a certain number of weeks. Could you explain that a little bit more robustly for those of us who are not as familiar with what accreditation is? Why do we need so many contact hours? How did that end up pushing exams into this spring semester?

**Jen Smith:** Right. So we, like all institutions, run through an accrediting body that's based regionally, so ours is the Higher Learning Commission for this portion of the country. And as a part of what we need to do, it's about delivering a robust and consistent academic experience that ultimately comes down to the units of that academic experience, our credit hours. And so we have very specific definitions about how many contact hours over how many weeks is equal to a credit hour, and then how many credit hours one needs to earn a degree. And there is not flexibility on that. We were given grace over the spring when we were disrupted. We talked to the Higher Learning Commission and they said, "Yes. We understand if you have to make adjustments," so we took a week then. But it's one thing to respond in crisis like that and it's yet another to plan moving forward. We had to plan a semester that met those basic criteria of how many contact hours over how many weeks equals a credit hour, equals a course, equals that component of your education. Our semesters are 15 weeks, and that 15th week is the final exam period. So that counts as one of our instructional weeks. And so, once that starting date got set, we needed to fit in that many weeks of instruction and that's what kicked us over to the new year.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks. I can say I'm very familiar personally with this. I used to work at a university in South Carolina, which is under the SACS accrediting body, and they actually have less weeks of contact than we do under HLC. And so, I think when we're looking at comparing our plan to some of the other institutions in the country, knowing that we're all under slightly different standards for the number of weeks, the number of credit hours, kind of helps to explain a little better. So thank you for that. Rob, I've got a question that is very hot topic for families, and I understand why. Can you explain if tuition, room, and board charges might be adjusted given this new schedule?

**Rob Wild:** Yes, I can. I've gotten that question already myself. So at the present time, and again, based on what we just talked about with accreditation and the number of instructional weeks, we're not planning on changing the tuition model at any point in the coming year. We are still planning to have as many in-person contact hours as we've had in the past. And so, that is staying the same. We are currently reviewing the housing and billing, excuse me, the housing and dining rates based on the new calendar because it has shortened the semester in the fall slightly by moving home for final exams. So our plan right now is to make final decisions before bills are due for the fall semester so that we can communicate those in advance. Nothing is going up. That's the good news.

**Katharine Pei:** Kirk, a couple of specifics around health and safety. Will the university require students to be tested for COVID before they arrive, or would we consider testing and once people are here? Are we talking about requiring students to wear masks and using hand sanitizer? If yes to the last two, will the university be providing PPE, and how? Because it's a little hard to get hold of right now.

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah, so a whole series of complex questions. And let me actually follow up with something that's part of your question for Rob as well. The health and wellness line is also considering a



number of other ways to engage around fees, in particular, around health insurance. And so, we're going to be looking to try and make some accommodations for whatever ends up happening with the requirement for health insurance here on campus and trying to make sure that our students are both insured and that we're respectful of the circumstances that are happening. So back to the other question, yes, it's very likely that students will be required to wear masks on campus as they go around and interact with one another. We will be providing masks and hand sanitizer and strongly encouraging students to continue with a good practice of washing their hands as thoroughly as it always has. This virus does have this Achilles heel that is very easy for us to be able to remedy if we wash our hands on a frequent basis. However, having seen some recent data today, it turns out that we tend to touch our face, specifically our mucous areas of our face, as our physicians like to say, about 36 times an hour. As it turns out, we don't wash our hands nearly that amount of time. So we're going to try and encourage students to be as cleanly as possible with regard to the things we know can serve to be able to preclude the transmission of this issue. So that being said, the hand sanitizer, the face masks, the distancing of six feet around one another, and also trying to make sure that we have routes to and from that create opportunities for students to have as little contact and engagement with one another as possible. Now, the first part of your question, Katharine, I think I didn't answer that one.

**Katharine Pei:** So, the first part, I think you answered it the best you can with the information you have available now, but thinking about testing, right?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah, testing.

**Katharine Pei:** What the university is considering?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah, so as you're reading across the nation, there's a lot of different types of testing, serology test for antibodies, and we had been-- if you'd asked me this question about a week and a half ago, we have been quite hopeful that the serology testing would be more accurate than it's turning out to be. There's a number of questions that we have about false positives and false negatives of that. So that one was a potential opportunity and one of the benefits of this model, as the Chancellor likes to say, is it gives us the right path into the fall and things like that end up changing or shifting one way or another, we'll be able to better adjust as we look to be able to stand up these services going in. So, currently, it's anticipated that we will certainly be looking to test students. The antibody test, the serology test, right now, are not proving to be as reliable and as narrow in their scope as we had hoped that they would be. So we continue to hope, between now and the start of school, that those tests will improve, and the tests that are more seeking confirmation-- the swab tests that everybody are talking about. To be able to get tested to see whether you have COVID right now, is something that we hope to be able to have, widely based. As people have been reading in the media, really, our ability to have students on the campus will hinge on access to testing, and when students do return back, if there is some sort of stand up tests that we might have available, like an antibody serology test that we can give broadly and quickly and have results back really fast, it's more likely under that kind of scenario that we would be testing everybody on their way in. However, if those are not available, then what we'll look to do is to be able to test folks that are symptomatic at the time to be able to see whether they have it and employ our quarantining and our other kind of containment and tracing strategies to be able to reduce the degree to which that is perpetuated across campus. As it was mentioned earlier, there is also this notion of cohorting that has a tremendous advantage, that is really difficult to implement in a college campus, that is also being considered, and that's the attempt to be able to package, if you will, groups of students into smaller entities that they do most of the things that they do over the course of their engagement of the university in those small groups. So that might be a group that they live with or that they take classes with, and so forth. That way, if there is an exposure to one of them, it tends to limit the

degree of which it could've spread by the time we caught hold of it. So, again, employing all sorts of both public health and our infectious disease control experts in trying to help guide the way that we structure the classrooms and the environment here.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks. Rob or Kawanna, can you speak to the campus life aspect of college? We've talked a lot about academics, while obviously the first priority for all of our students, there's a lot more to college. The co-curricular experiences, some of which are also academic, right? Study abroad. Our undergraduate research opportunities. Some are more social in nature. Our fraternities and sororities. Acapella groups and other student organizations. What thoughts have been put into place about how we ensure students can still have a robust collegiate experience that are safe in doing so, knowing some of those things like acapella, that's a lot of people, probably without a mask, seeing and talking in a close space to someone else.

**Kawanna Leggett:** I'll let our current Dean of Students take that.

**Rob Wild:** I was afraid you're going to do that, Kawanna. Come to the webinar next week and Kawanna will answer this question. So that's a really great question. So again, to have an in-person residential experience means we are going to have some acapella performances this fall on campus. It means students are going to want to participate in club sports. It means people will be living in fraternity houses. It means all of the student groups that existed when your students left us in March, most of them will be back next year. Now, how they engage in the rules and the expectations that we set around those events are going to be different. Many of you know that there's a-- or may know-- that there's a large event every fall and spring that our students look forward to that is not named after me but it is called WILD. That's a huge concert in the quadrangle. It's a long-standing WashU tradition. I can tell you now - I told a group of students this on the phone yesterday afternoon - we probably aren't going to fall WILD-- where we pack 3,000 students into the quad with a live concert. Well, we are going to have some acapella concerts. And we may have to do it in a way where people are sitting four to six feet apart or more, if the guidance suggests that, in Graham Chapel. We may have to have the performers on the stage sitting further apart. But we are working on that. That one group that I mentioned, Danforth Campus Programs and Events, is going to focus on that. And there's a lot of aspects to this. How do we do spectator sports? How do we manage travel for our fall athletes? All of those questions are being considered right now. And our goal is by July 31st, to have those recommendations in place.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Jen, maybe this is a question for you. We have a large population of international students. And, right now, there are some restrictions on who can come into the United States for our students who are currently outside of the country. What considerations have been made for our international students who may or may not be able to be on campus in September? Also, our I-20 forms all need to be updated with new arrival dates. How are we going to make sure they can still be part of our academic experience?

**Jen Smith:** Right. So the group working on faculty training and support is supporting faculty in designing class experiences that are accessible remotely, and that's going to be the case for the very large majority of our courses. And so, we're working things such that our students will be able to take part in classes from wherever they are. And again, that's going to be the vast majority. And if we have some classes that are not-- that don't support remote engagement, we'll make sure that any curricular requirements, those classes satisfy that there is a course that satisfies the same requirement that is accessible remotely. So we are going to do absolutely everything we can. And right now, I can imagine why we will keep people on track for their degrees, even if they can't make it back to St. Louis. And that's part of the complexity and the challenge that we are building support for faculty this summer is to really reimagine their classes in a way that provides that experience. And so, this is part of what we're doing. We will ultimately update

our course listings with more information about what the format of our courses will be, so students will be able to make informed decisions about what these courses are going to look like. And if they ultimately want to switch things up to support their format of engagement, then they'll have the opportunity to do that.

**Katharine Pei:** Great. Thank you, Rob. I see a lot of questions still about Thanksgiving. I don't know if you're able to give a definitive answer or not, but people really want to know. Will the university allow students to travel home for Thanksgiving or are we going to require the students to stay on campus?

**Rob Wild:** That's a great question. We don't know the answer to that yet. I do want to acknowledge a comment that somebody said in the chat that made me smile. I've heard this from a couple of parents over the last week. Somebody said, and I'm going to paraphrase this. "You can keep them over Thanksgiving. We are going to be sick of having them home by now or by September." I have heard from a few families, I know nobody on this call, who are ready to send their students back to us tomorrow. In all seriousness, the issue of travel is one that we're going to be carefully monitoring and making recommendations about throughout the semester. And travel requirements around quarantine when students return to campus. Again, we have many activities that do involve some travel and we have many students. We're not going to be able to have a gate at the corner of the campus. And if a student decides they're going to go home to Memphis in the middle of November or the middle of October, we're not going to be regulating that, but we are going to set some expectations that we're going to ask people to abide by based on what we know about the public health environment at that time. And I expect that it's going to evolve as the semester evolves. And so I can't tell you now what we're going to recommend for Thanksgiving. We're going to be planning for many, many different contingencies. One being that we ask all of our students to stay and what programming would then be required for us to make sure that our students are having a robust Thanksgiving experience on campus. One may be that they're allowed to travel or we're recommending that students from certain parts of the country are not recommended to travel based on what we're seeing at that time. And we would ask them to help us with that. Again, it's too early to say, but we are going to be continuing to keep you posted on this. I know this makes it very difficult for the purchase of airline tickets and flights and those kinds of things. We are going to try to have more updated information as we get closer to the start of the semester that will help you make good decisions about this. But that is, as we've said at the outset on this call, that is the most challenging aspect, that and the final exams, of this revised schedule, for sure.

**Kawanna Leggett:** And the one piece around the residential experience in the past, we have not closed during those breaks. And so we've remained opened over fall break, Thanksgiving break, and even over the winter break. So certainly, if the decision is made that students stay, we have the infrastructure and the staff and the dining services to be able to support those, if that is the decision.

**Kirk Dougher:** And just to follow up on that a little bit. What we don't know is if there is going to be a second wave, and obviously some of the concerns that we have moving forward are around when that might happen, if that might happen, and what that would look like. And similar to the way that circumstances hit the United States, if that is the case, there's likely to be areas that have higher degrees of exposure. And at the end of the day, the fewer people that your students come in contact with and have an exposure experience, the less probable that they are to be able to acquire that and bring COVID back to the community. And really, what we're asking for and will be trying to help our students understand is that we do function as and think of ourselves as the WashU family. And the more that we can do to be able to protect one another by fewer exposures to outside environments and by following the recommendations that Dr. Wild has mentioned and our public health guidance are giving us, the more probable that we are to be able to keep our students and our WashU community safe. And as

parents, we would strongly appreciate any support that you might be able to give in this direction to encourage your students that despite some of the things that they might want to do, there might be some better examples of what they could do under these unusual circumstances. Certainly, we can point to circumstances in the beaches and the lakes of the Ozarks as bad examples of things that absolutely we're going to say, "Please, please don't do that." But for the most part, we really would appreciate any of your help moving into the semester of doing everything you can to encourage your students to be able to keep each other safe.

**Katharine Pei:** So, Kirk, a follow up for you about keeping each other safe. What are WashU's plans to support students, and faculty and staff for that matter, who may have underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yes, that's a phenomenal question and a complex one at that. So there are a number of folks who are immunocompromised at one level or another. Or they may be in positions where some facet about themselves puts them at higher risk. And certainly, the scenarios that we're looking at create an ease of opportunity for those folks to be able to engage or disengage as they see fit. In other words, our goal is to make sure that folks who might be in higher-risk populations that want to engage the campus community have the same ability to do so as the other students or other faculty do. And likewise, and inversely so, those that have concerns about their ability to engage have the opportunity to make sure that their risk is reduced. And so we're trying to create policies and processes that make it easier for folks to be able to self-select into those populations so that they can keep themselves safe.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Jen, I have a question for you for all of our families who have a student who are pre-health. Do we know if our finals taking place in January 2021 are going to conflict with the MCAT?

**Jen Smith:** Oh, that's a very good question. I will tell you. Do we know the date of the January MCAT?

**Katharine Pei:** I will have someone look that up and then come back to it in just a second.

**Jen Smith:** As we were messing with the specifics of the exam schedule, we will make sure that we allow for people to take the MCAT assuming that the MCAT is being set in person.

**Katharine Pei:** Kirk, one more question for you. You talked about how your team is really thinking about how we provide services for our students, both for our health and our mental health. What considerations are being made around mental health? Especially considering a lot of us have been cooped up at home for a while, right? I'm on day 73 of being in my house. It's hard to go through isolation, particularly for those who may be already struggling with some mental health issues. And so what considerations is your team putting in place for how we best support folks through what has been just a really troubling and difficult time and will continue to be for a while?

**Kirk Dougher:** Well, so first, I'd say that even under the best of circumstances, we all struggle with mental health concerns. I mean, that's just sort of the baseline. And I expect that sometimes, we choose that off as the exception rather than rule. And as it turns out, it's more of the rule being part of humanity that we struggle with that. The circumstances that we have now certainly complicate that, and even more exacerbated for certain types of struggles. So there is a consortium across university counseling centers that are trying to provide a lot of guidance on what it is that we're doing. For now, one of the difficulties that we face is trying to find how we do our work in a way that allows us to do the best that we possibly can. So it's really hard to both blow your nose and cry with a mask on. And so that creates a difficulty. But yet in-person therapy is what our students are tending to not only prefer but find to be the most useful. That being said, there's also a great deal of utility in some of the teletherapy that we have been doing and the ways that we have been engaging. So we're trying to be able to figure out what is the

safest and best option for being able to do that because what we know is that our first engagements with students are better for the students and better for the therapeutic process if we're doing it live in person, but exactly how we operate that way is still something that we're trying to be able to figure out how we do that well. Additionally, there are some other things that we have been doing that we'll be leaning into much harder going into the fall to make sure that we're trying to reduce the probability that students are in need of those resources. So health promotion strategies, where we get into preventing and promoting some good practices of resilience and self-care and wellbeing, are going to be even more important, and as we lean towards those a little bit more heavily than we otherwise would, we want to make sure that we're helping students. So suffice it to say, we should have both of those entities in place to be able to help our students. Good mental health services, on-campus, in-person to some degree, teletherapy for those that want to make sure they can access it from distance. And distance might be their res hall room to Habib. And in fact, I would expect that that would probably be a frequent occurrence, and then also to be able to engage with good health promotion practices.

**Jen Smith:** Very quick update. So the MCAT 2021 dates have not yet been released, but if they were scheduled for the same dates they were this year, they would not conflict, even for the same kind of dates in the year, in the month. No conflict. So looks promising.

**Katharine Pei:** I'll also say I cheated a little bit. My partner is an assistant dean for student affairs at a medical school, and I asked him, and he said that he's on calls with the AAMC every day, which is the American Association of Medical Colleges, he said they are rethinking completely all of their testing for undergraduate students who may be considering taking the MCAT as well as for students currently in medical school because they don't have testing sites. So I think that we all will be learning more about that soon. And Jen, I know that many families, if they are concerned about students being able to study for both the MCAT and finals, so just add that to your list, if you could, about [laughter] the never-ending list. We, unfortunately, need to ask our last question. And I want to acknowledge, there are literally hundreds that we haven't had the chance to get to yet. But what we have done is that we've taken all the questions you have submitted, we are going to go through those questions, and we're going to put as many answers as we can on the university's COVID FAQ page for you as soon as we are able to. And so we will try our best to answer as many of those questions online as we can. But my last question is for you, Rob. We talked today about the fall semester. Has the university thought at all about what spring 2021 might look like, and if that calendar might potentially change?

**Rob Wild:** Well, the intent of announcing the schedule yesterday was actually to announce both the fall and the spring schedule, not just so you all can plan for that, but so our faculty can plan for the full academic year. And so in the middle of a global pandemic, I would be hesitant to say anything is final. But our intent at the moment is to move forward with the start date on January 25th, which is a little bit later. We will run a little bit later into May with our instruction on our finals. I've had this question today for our members of the class of 2021. The commencement date will not change. Excitingly, the class of 2021 will graduate on May 21, 2021. And so you can mark your calendars for that, and that is what we are planning towards. Again, that extended winter break away-- normally, we have students away from campus for around four weeks. This year is a little bit more extended, as many universities are doing to try to, again, prepare, readjust, and make sure that we are planning appropriately for the spring, and what we will know then about the public health environment. So I do want to say thank you to Katharine and all of you for your time and for spending your evening with us.

**Katharine Pei:** So panelists, to echo what Rob just said, thank you so much for spending some time with us. Families, thank you so much for being with us again. We know that there were many questions we weren't able to get to, but we are going to work on those answers. We also know a lot of our answers were, we're working on it, and we'll have more information soon. And I know that can be really

frustrating and hard to hear, and so we are working as diligently as we can. We will share as much as we can as soon as we can. And please be on the lookout for more information on the university's COVID website under the FAQ section soon. If you'd like a recording of this webinar, we will post it on [families.wustl.edu](https://families.wustl.edu) beginning next week. Thank you again, and we will be in touch soon. Have a good evening.