

July 29, 2020

Dear Friends,

### **Student Arrivals**

So far it looks like we'll have the vast majority of returning students studying on campus for the fall semester. As of today, of the 1,227 students who were asked to declare their plans for the fall, 86.5% (1,038) plan to return to take classes on campus and 11.42% (137) plan to take classes remotely. The Registrar's office has done excellent work getting these numbers for us. They called hundreds of students yesterday and last night who had not responded to the email form, and are continuing to reach out to those students who have not replied yet. Incoming first-year and transfer students will receive their course schedules later this week, and then they will make their decisions by the middle of next week—at least those who are not in the Finding Your Place (FYP) course, since that group is due to arrive on Monday.

Students start arriving on campus this Friday! FYP mentors will report to Cravens Hall for their COVID-19 testing between 8 and 10 a.m. Then they will go to their rooms to quarantine until their test results are known. During that time they will complete their COVID-19 training, and the Wellness Center and Student Activities have assembled a variety of virtual activities—meditation, yoga, TED talks, playlists, etc. [More details can be found here.](#)

The move-in schedule begins with FYP mentors arriving this Friday, and continues with FYP students, student leaders, and some athletic teams arriving next week. The remaining groups of first-year and returning students will arrive between Aug. 10 and 16. You can see the [full schedule online.](#)

### **#ProtectTheBubble**

As you know, "Protect the Bubble" has become a catchphrase indicating that we must create and protect a metaphorical "bubble" to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus and mitigate its effects on campus and in the community. We will closely monitor the virus through screening, testing, tracing, quarantine, and isolation to prevent its spread.

Protecting the Bubble also means that programs that would normally have activities off the Domain will not be able to do so. Activities for FYP, PRE-Orientation, the Sewanee Outing Program (SOP), and civic engagement, as well as all academic fieldwork, will be confined to the Domain. Fortunately, we do have 13,000 acres on which to conduct these activities and others.

Student Life in particular is working hard and thinking creatively to ensure that students have plenty to do on campus in order to Protect the Bubble. Students have received several messages in the past two weeks about interim policies. Student Life sent an email to students on Monday that outlined plans for entertainment, such as movies under the stars on a 24-foot inflatable movie screen. The SOP and the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability will offer opportunities for hiking, climbing, fishing, and canoeing. Students are encouraged to bring a camping chair or other outdoor seating to facilitate outdoor gatherings to sing, dance, play

games, or just hang out. We are also planning ways to provide, on campus, services that students would normally need to leave campus for, including a variety of food options.

And speaking of food, the rumors that McClurg will not be open and that all food will be take-out are not true! We are outfitting Cravens Hall to serve as an auxiliary dining facility, Stirling's will open with online ordering, and the Tiger Bay Pub will be part of the board plan with made-to-order breakfast, special sandwiches, tots and fries, as well as McClurg omelets. [Chef Rick has supplied some great information about dining.](#)

### **Programming for Students This Fall**

As we begin to welcome students back to the Domain at the end of this week, I'd like to help give some clarity around programming with students on campus. Student organizations have received directives on how they can register and hold events on campus, and faculty have received guidance on remote and in-person teaching during this unprecedented time. But what about departments that hold programs for students on campus? What are the expectations this fall for these types of events? Please keep reading for those expectations:

- Each and every one of us on the Domain must remain committed to following the [Interim Health Policies and Practices](#), which include practicing the three W's—wearing a mask, washing our hands, and watching our distance.
- All student organization-run events are required to be held outside. For office and department-sponsored programs and events, we ask that you hold your programs and events outside if at all possible. Whether inside or outside, the three W's still must be followed.
- The University is erecting several tents across campus, and we encourage groups and departments to use those for programming whenever possible. Classes take priority for using the tent space, but once classes start the tents should be [reservable via EMS](#) just like other campus spaces.
- No University events are permitted to be held off the Domain.
- The current limit for attendance at planned events and programs is 50; however, that number must be lower if an event is held inside and six feet of social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Can groups still “table”? Yes, following all interim policies. Tabling, like other events, should be held outside if at all possible.
- Event sponsors should keep an accurate list of attendees for contact tracing purposes, in the event that a participant tests positive and our contact tracers need that list.
- There should not be any shared food at any event (e.g., pizza). We encourage you to work with Sewanee Dining if your event requires catering.
- If you are not comfortable with in-person programs, and virtual programming makes sense, then that is absolutely a viable option.

- If you are not comfortable with in-person programs but being in-person would significantly enhance the activity, contact [Lauren Goodpaster](#). She has volunteered to help you create a scenario that is as safe as possible and makes sense.

### **Employee Testing**

Employee COVID-19 testing has been completed. We [tested 670 employees](#) and had one person test positive for detectable coronavirus. Whenever a positive test result is received, University staff collaborate with the Tennessee Department of Health to conduct contact tracing and notify the close contacts of a positive test. If you have not been notified, then you are not considered to have increased risk because of exposure to an individual who tested positive.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

This year more than usual, families and students are feeling uncertain about what life will be like on campus. If your supervisor agrees and you have time to volunteer for the following opportunities, please do.

- Move-in: You can help families and students feel more welcome and comfortable. (No carrying of boxes required!) Volunteers are needed from Aug. 3 to Aug. 16 to greet students at residence halls and—in a friendly way—keep families outside. Others are needed to deliver boxed lunches from McClurg to residence hall lobbies while students wait for their test results. [Use this form](#) to see available dates and times, and to volunteer.
- Student testing: We also need volunteers who can work at the Cravens testing site during the morning hours (7:30-10:30 a.m.) between Aug. 9 and Aug. 16. Duties are primarily shepherding arriving students through the stages of the test process, answering questions, completing paperwork, and helping to keep the process running smoothly. Contact [Stacey O'Sullivan](#) if you're able to help out.

### **From My Perspective**

Can you believe it is here? August! I remember in March when I could hardly see past the next day. The work of the EMET was relentless, meeting twice every day for two hours each meeting. I looked back at our notes from the first week. Here are a few of our accomplishments: First we formed the EMET and created a bunch of working groups; we postponed commencements and canceled all public events; offices closed or posted new hours; we extended spring break, faculty worked on making their courses remote, and students were told not to return after break; students who could not leave campus were accommodated; students who needed technology were sent laptops by IT; most employees started working remotely, so we put a lot of interim policies in place and the University committed to paying all employees through June 30. That and more was week one!

We couldn't even dream of August. It was weeks before we could turn to summer, and the FOG met for the first time on the last day of April. Two weeks ago I outlined the logistics we are lining up. It has been quite a ride—and it is just getting started. This is usually our lull and we

can enjoy a couple of weeks of down time at this point in the summer. At this time last year David and I spent two and a half weeks in Ireland. We aren't going to get that calm before the storm this year. I understand the weariness that I see in some of your faces and that I hear in your voices. We will not get the calm before the storm, but I'm looking forward to the excitement of the students' return (yes, with some level of anxiety and trepidation) to provide a second (or third or fourth) wind to carry us into the semester. I appreciate what all of you have done to get us to this point and what you will do to carry us through. We can do this.

Sincerely,

Nancy Berner

Provost