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January 2021
OPEN AND STAY OPEN

Just like the fall semester, we want the campus of Pittsburg State University to be a place where students come together. We learned a lot during the fall semester, and successfully held in-person classes without in-class transmission. This is due to good planning but also due to you and your actions - we are very proud of our students and their compliance with our COVID-19 mitigation practices while they were on campus.

We intend to restart coursework and student life on January 19. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact our campus throughout the spring semester, so therefore we are continuing the Pitt State Together initiative when we reconvene. We will also continuously monitor the COVID-19 situation in our area, and announce changes as needed.

We will once again conduct the semester using these guiding principles:

- Do what we can to maintain the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff
- Maintain transparency with thorough and frequent communication as the situation evolves
- Provide high-quality experiences for our students that preserve progress toward a degree

NOTE: While these guiding principles will endure, the information in this document could change and will grow as the pandemic evolves and we respond on our campus.

PLEDGE TO A HEALTHY CAMPUS

To help our campus reconvene and stay open, it'll take all of us working together, and students have a huge role in our success. If you have not already done so in the fall, we ask that you commit to doing the right things to help keep our campus and community safe, starting with taking the Pitt State Together pledge. We cannot remove all risk, but we can all behave in ways that help us keep our campus open all semester.

Take the pledge here!

STAY TUNED IN

If our plans change, or if we need to communicate other important information, you'll be notified by email. Please pay special attention to your account. Please also regularly check our website and follow Pitt State on social media for the latest updates.

pittstate.edu/coronavirus
During 2020, we established a close working relationship with our local public health officials, who, together with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, help us translate the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention into workable virus mitigation solutions for our campus. Our campus leadership, including our own healthcare professionals at the Bryant Student Health Center, will continue this working relationship for the foreseeable future.

We also learned a lot, adjusted as we went, and figured out how to facilitate a return to some form of normalcy when we could. This drive toward normalcy will continue in the spring, with the added optimism of a COVID-19 vaccine.

We will continue to operate campus with these things in mind:

- **Community health.** We have a responsibility to do all we can to reduce risk of virus spread among ourselves and our communities.
- **Students first.** We are committed to providing transformational experiences to our current and incoming students.
- **Agility and flexibility.** There is no one right answer. Each department will continue to determine how their areas will operate to meet public health guidelines while maintaining quality programs and services.
- **Keeping campus safe.** We will continue to require masks, ask that you self-assess your health each day, help us disinfect the spaces you use, and follow all social distancing guidelines. This is all designed to help everyone take personal responsibility for keeping our campus safe.
- **Reducing risk.** There is no way to remove all risk, but we are doing everything we can to reduce it and we ask that you do the same in your personal life.

Feedback is welcome, and input from our students is important. Please email social@pittstate.edu with questions.
DO THESE THINGS NOW

Getting a healthy start to the spring semester at Pittsburg State University greatly depends on your actions NOW. Do everything you can to prevent contracting the virus before you return to campus. This means:

- **Wear a mask.** The is one of the most important things you can do to help reduce virus transmission. Wearing a mask is required on the campus of Pittsburg State University with few exceptions. See our face mask policy at pittstate.edu/coronavirus.

- **Stay away from large gatherings.** Don't attend crowded parties or other large gatherings where the virus is proven to spread quickly.

- **Follow isolation and quarantine rules.** If you experience symptoms, if you have been exposed (even if you do not show symptoms), and if you await COVID-19 test results. Stay in touch with your healthcare provider throughout.

- **Continue social distancing.** Always maintain distance between yourself and others with whom you do not live.

- **Maintain good hygiene.** Wash your hands very frequently. Use hand sanitizer if you can’t. Regularly disinfect your living space, your car, your phone, and anything else you use frequently.

- **Know what to do if you are exposed.** Fully understand all quarantine guidelines, as they have changed recently. Understand when you should get tested, and how to get tested.

- **Understand travel restrictions.** The State of Kansas mandates a 14-day quarantine for anyone in these scenarios. Please monitor this site and do not plan high-risk travel.

REALLY – DO THEM NOW!

It really is extremely important that you protect yourself over the next week, and limit your exposure to the virus as much as possible. We are doing our part to make campus safe - please do your part to stay safe until you return in January.
CAMPUS REQUIREMENTS

We know that COVID-19 is most commonly spread through inhalation of respiratory droplets from an infected person. Many times, infected people do not know they are infected (they are asymptomatic). Therefore, it is important that we take all the available precautions to prevent spread.

1. WEAR A MASK
Masks are required everywhere on campus with few exceptions. Read the face mask policy here to understand exceptions and enforcement measures.

Students requiring an accommodation for recognized disabilities that prevent mask wearing can contact Student Accommodations.

One washable mask was provided to each student in the fall. If you are new to PSU in the spring, please obtain your mask at the info desk in Overman Student Center. Please plan to provide additional masks of your own as needed, or check with Gorilla Pantry for a donated mask (gorillapantry@pittstate.edu).

2. DAILY HEALTH ASSESSMENT
Every student who lives on or visits campus for any reason must conduct a self-assessment of their health. If you have symptoms or have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive for the virus, STAY HOME. Do not attend in-person classes or go anywhere if you are sick or have been exposed.

3. SOCIAL DISTANCING
Keep your distance from other people. This means maintaining six feet of distance between yourself and others. The only exception to this rule are academic circumstances that last less than 15 minutes and where protective equipment is in place to prevent spread of the virus.
When not on our campus, it is critically important that you adhere to all public health guidelines - stay home if you are sick, wear a mask, practice social distancing and good personal hygiene, and avoid large gatherings of any kind. Please remember that you and your fellow students have tremendous positive impact in the Pittsburg community. Let's keep it that way.

**Find new ways to socialize.**

College life is in large part about forging new friendships and finding your place among your peers. It's also just really important to stay connected with others, and you no doubt learned and practiced new ways to do this during the fall semester. Keep up the good work, and be on the lookout for opportunities from the Campus Activities Center. A few ideas:

- **Take it outside.** Getting outdoors is good for your physical and mental health. Plan activities with a few friends that allow for social distancing. Take advantage of our beautiful campus and all its outdoor facilities. Walk or bike the many trails in and around Pittsburg.
- **Stay home.** Plan a hallway social hour in your residence hall, with participants staying distanced at their own doorways. Host a small outdoor gathering at your house or apartment, making sure to wear masks and social distance. Plan an evening in with your roommate.
- **Go online.** There are plenty of options for playing games, sharing a movie, and chatting with friends and groups online.

**Be part of the solution.**

Many Pittsburg businesses, employers, and public spaces are committed to community health, and will actively enforce mask requirements and social distancing guidelines. Be a good customer, a good employee, and a good citizen - follow the rules. They are in place for your safety and the safety of those around you. Be part of the solution!

**Follow all public health guidelines.**

Isolate if you are sick. Adhere to mandated quarantines. Wear a mask. Wash your hands and practice other good hygiene. Keep distance between yourself and others. Avoid large gatherings. Avoid crowds (parties, bars).
This is a uniquely stressful and emotional time in our lives, but we have light at the end of the tunnel. As we proceed through the spring semester, it’s important that we support each other and lift each other up. That is especially true during tense debates and conversations, particularly those that take place on social media.

We won’t all agree on everything. We never do. But we can and must always respect one another and speak as we’d prefer to be spoken to.

With social media, it’s easy to call people out and instigate and argue and use words we wouldn’t use during an in-person conversation. It’s easy to be angry and fight. Don’t do that.

Be kind. Be patient with each other. Help each other through this. We’re all in this together, and the only way we’ll get to the other side is by doing it together.

Our primary mission is to provide transformational experiences to you. We are here for you. We want you to be safe, healthy, and happy. We want your time at Pitt State to be amazing, even during difficult times. We love having productive conversations with you. We want to help.

If you have concerns or challenges and you feel we can help solve them, please contact us at social@pittstate.edu. We’ll answer fast, we promise.
MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

It is important to understand the symptoms of COVID-19. Watch for the following:

- Cough, fever, chills, sore throat, muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Gastrointestinal symptoms

If you exhibit these symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider for further guidance. This can be your personal physician, or you can contact the Bryant Student Health Center at 620-235-4452.

ALWAYS ISOLATE/QUARANTINE IF:

- You exhibit any of the symptoms above.
- You are awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- You have made close contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19.

Stay in touch with your healthcare provider or the Bryant Student Health Center during this time.

AT RISK INDIVIDUALS

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified conditions that may put certain individuals at increased risk for poor COVID-19 outcomes. These conditions include:

- Age - 65 years or older
- Moderate to severe asthma
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Immunocompromised conditions of all kinds

If you are at risk, please talk to your healthcare provider before returning to campus. If you have a recognized disability that requires accommodations related to COVID-19, contact Student Accommodations.

MONITOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Uncertainty, health worries, and social isolation are real concerns and should not be ignored. It is important to take care of yourself. Take breaks from social media, take a walk with a trusted confidante, and stay connected with your family and friends. Professional help is here for you, too: University Counseling Services.

January 2021
CLASSROOMS AND COURSEWORK
Public health guidelines have brought challenges and, in some cases, opportunities to our campus and how we deliver our courses. Each of our hundreds of classrooms and thousands of courses is unique and requires careful and individual thought.

This spring, classes will be delivered one of five ways:
- **Fully online**: 100% of instruction is online through Canvas and does not require attendance on campus.
- **HyFlex**: full-class instruction is delivered online either synchronously during the scheduled class time or asynchronously via a recording in Canvas. The class is split into smaller groups by the instructor and required to attend face-to-face sessions as assigned.
- **Hybrid**: a minimum of 50% of instruction is online through Canvas, and established classroom meeting dates are listed in the schedule of classes.
- **Face-to-face**: course content and learning material are taught in person.
- **Other**: specific techniques/schedule/process due to the nature of instruction required.

Classrooms are appropriately socially distanced and equipped to ensure proper sound amplification.

The **course schedule** is current and reflects the delivery method selected for each of your courses. If after viewing your course schedule you have questions or concerns, please contact your **academic advisor or the chairperson for your department**. Department chairpersons are listed in the contact information for each department at pittstate.edu/academics.

BE READY FOR CHANGE
These are uncertain times. We can do our best to predict the path of the pandemic, but we know it's smarter to instead prepare for as many scenarios as we can. **You should do this, too.**
- **Be tech-ready.** Make sure you have the technology you need to complete your coursework remotely, if needed. **Check out IT resources and guidance here.**
- **Stay flexible.** Remember that we cannot predict everything, and neither can you. It's ok - we are in this together. Living with uncertainty is difficult, but we can do it if we remain change-ready.
- **Keep in touch.** Speak up, ask questions, and seek to understand the resources available to you. We have a wealth of support for you - take advantage of it.
- **Check your course schedule.** Do this regularly, as things could change.
RESIDENCE HALLS

University residence halls are dynamic, fast-paced, and highly interactive living-learning environments. Over the fall semester, we implemented processes that help make them healthier environments for students living near one another.

- **New occupancy standard:** for the spring semester, students are encouraged to opt for a single room assignment when available, allowing for control over your personal environment and increasing opportunity for social distancing and COVID-19 avoidance. Starting in fall 2021, our default assignment option will be single rooms to enable more personal space, and additional privacy and comfort. Students will still have the option to request a roommate if they choose.

- **Air purification:** Prior to the spring 2021 semester, a Synexis Microbial Reduction System was installed in each residence hall room, all common area restrooms, and some high-traffic common areas. This technology uses dry hydrogen peroxide (DHP) molecules to reduce viruses, bacteria, and fungi in the air and on surfaces. Synexis devices are installed in many other facilities such as hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and schools.

- **Increased sanitation:** high-traffic public spaces in all residence halls are disinfected twice per day. Residents are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their private rooms.

- **Off-campus quarantine and isolation:** should a student living in a residence hall become infected with COVID-19 or be named as a close contact with an infected person, they are required to complete their mandatory isolation or quarantine at an off-campus location. Most students are expected to complete this at their permanent residence, though alternative space and meal delivery may be available on a limited basis to students whose circumstances prevent that option.

We believe that the combination of these efforts and if students practice self-protection measures (masks, social distancing, strict hygiene and personal space disinfecting routine) they can be safe and virus free. However, given the nature of COVID-19, it is very likely that some students living in residence halls will be diagnosed with the virus.
CAMPUS DINING

Our hospitality partner Sodexo is well-prepared for students to arrive back at our campus. A few things to note:

- All food service workers have had health and safety training. Focus areas are respiratory hygiene, personal protective equipment use, social distancing, and more.

- **Gibson Dining Hall** details:
  - The space is equipped with directional signage to communicate traffic patterns that relieve congestion
  - Hand sanitizer stations are available at the entryway
  - Plexiglas separates workers from diners at service stations
  - Additional sanitation procedures throughout
  - Furniture adjusted to accommodate social distancing, and additional space for dining available at Gibson Underground
  - Personal refillable containers are not allowed
  - All utensils are wrapped, and condiments pre-portioned to avoid high-touch situations

At all campus dining areas managed by Sodexo, a table sanitation system is in place. Tables sanitized and ready for diners are clearly marked, as are those requiring sanitation before the next user.

Sodexo also utilizes their Bite+ app, which enables students to order takeout from Gibson Dining Hall.

FACILITIES

Stepped-up disinfection practices remain in place, and watch for reminders and directional signage around campus. Please follow all instructions - they are designed to keep you safe.

- **Classroom sanitation.** Classrooms are cleaned daily. Each academic department has supplies for classrooms as needed.
- **Common area sanitation.** Common areas are cleaned daily.
- **Elevators.** Elevators and elevator lobbies are limited to one occupant at a time. Please use the stairs unless you are mobility-impaired. Wash your hands after using the elevator or a stair rail.
- **Stairwells and hallways.** One-way traffic has been established in many stairwells and hallways. Please watch for and abide by posted signage.
- **Office and work space sanitation.** If you work on campus, know that each office has disinfecting supplies and employees are responsible for their own work spaces.
EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Like the fall semester, all allowed events and activities are required to adhere to state-ordered gathering limits, mask mandates, and any University-required health and safety guidelines. Please follow announcements from Campus Activities, Gorilla Activities Board, Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Student Rec Center to stay current on the status of most events and activities.

LINKS

Pitt State Coronavirus Web Page. Central information and announcement resource for the University's COVID-19 response.

Crawford County Health Department. Information about COVID-19 in our county. Includes guidance on testing and treatment.


American College Health Association. The voice of student health and wellness, ACHA provides guidance, best practices, planning help, and more.


World Health Organization. Resource for the pandemic on a global scale, including travel advisories, evolving symptom and treatment guidance, and prevention techniques.

QUESTIONS AND HELP

We know you'll have a lot of questions - don't hesitate to ask them. To get the fastest response, please direct your question to the appropriate department. If you aren't sure, no problem - send it to social@pittstate.edu.

Bryant Student Health Center - physical and mental health questions

University Housing - all residence hall questions

Registrar - all enrollment questions

Your academic department - all questions about course delivery

Student Success - getting started at Pitt State

Financial Assistance - CARES relief or any other student aid question

Don't forget your academic advisor - they are here to help, too.