



TO: All Faculty

FROM: Sanj Kulkarni, Dean of the Faculty
Jill Dolan, Dean of the College
Pablo Debenedetti, Dean for Research
Cole Crittenden, Acting Dean of the Graduate School

RE: Spring 2021 and the University's COVID-19 Resources

January 20, 2021

Colleagues, we hope you're well in these turbulent times. Although the pandemic still profoundly disrupts our work, University staff have strived to ensure our health and safety as we continue to conduct our research, teach our classes, and maintain our professional lives in whatever transformed ways necessary. This memo describes much of what's been accomplished to allow us to do so, including information about the University's COVID preparations as we move toward the spring semester.

We've provided some updates about key topics below. More information can be found on the University's [Spring Term 2021](#) and [Princeton COVID Resources](#) websites, which are updated regularly.

Undergraduate Students on Campus and in the Surrounding Area

Social Contract, Public Health Campaign, and Community Advocates. All undergraduate students living on campus, in Mercer County, and in Plainsboro must sign and abide by the [Social Contract for Spring 2021](#) and participate in the University's [COVID-19 testing protocols](#). Given the public health implications of infractions, we've made students and their parents aware that the social contract will be strictly enforced, and that violating its terms will have consequences that may include requiring a student to leave campus.

To prepare for the students' arrival, the University launched a multifaceted public health campaign. The [Princeton Playbook](#) campaign focuses on four principles—prepare, protect, participate, and persist.

Additionally, Vice President for Campus Life W. Rochelle Calhoun is leading efforts to launch a pilot *Community Advocates* program, involving staff from across campus, which will help to promote community wellbeing through COVID-19 education and reinforcement of public health expectations. Advocates will walk various parts of campus, greeting students and ensuring face coverings and physical distancing are maintained. They'll also answer questions and provide an adult presence, given that most staff and faculty continue working from home.

Arrival Quarantine. Undergraduate students began returning to campus on Friday, January 15; the last will arrive no later than Friday, January 24. All undergraduates newly returning to campus (as well as students who will live off-campus but plan to access campus facilities), must participate in a seven-day arrival quarantine before the start of the spring semester February 1.

Students will be tested for COVID-19 immediately on arrival to campus, and all students will be in strict quarantine until they receive their first test result. Those who receive a positive result will move into our isolation protocols; those receiving a negative result will enter an arrival quarantine. This will allow them to take a walk around campus for an hour each day, and to leave their rooms to pick up food at one of the 18 pop-up locations established to serve students throughout the arrival quarantine period.

The residential colleges have encouraged seniors to use their quarantine time to work on their thesis projects, creatively staging the typical senior thesis "bootcamps" virtually. We're eager for students to continue meeting interim deadlines so that they can produce, on time, theses of which they can be proud.

Student Use of Space on Campus. We're finishing an extensive review of residential college spaces that might be available for student use for studying and socializing, in public health-appropriate ways. The residential college spaces will be supplemented by select locations in some academic buildings (such as atria and other public spaces where students can be physically distanced) in which students can study. Firestone and other libraries will also be open for undergraduate and graduate students on a reservation-only basis.

Graduate Students on Campus and in the Surrounding Area

We expect spring numbers to look like fall, when 1,650 graduate students lived or worked on campus (out of 3,065 enrolled graduate students). About 1,300 were in University housing, and another 350 were pulled into the testing protocol because of their presence on campus in labs, in the library, or in in-person courses.

Wintersession

Overlapping with the undergraduate student arrival quarantine period, the University will hold its first ever [Wintersession](#) from January 18-31. All 266 daytime workshops and 24

evening events are fully virtual. More than 2,600 students, faculty, and staff have registered for at least one session (nearly 2,000 of the unique registrants are undergraduate and graduate students).

Testing

The campus COVID-19 testing laboratory is prepared for the increased demand related to the arrival of undergraduates and the return of additional faculty, staff, and students to support student life and education. The lab is usually able to provide next-day results, which has improved the overall turnaround time for the asymptomatic testing program.

Both the campus lab and the contract lab (Accurate Diagnostics) confirmed that they are able to detect the recently noted variants of the virus. Soon, the Lewis Center for Integrative Genomics will be conducting DNA sequencing of a sampling of positive specimens each week to identify unusual variants or evidence of outbreaks or clusters.

Undergraduate students living on campus or living off-campus locally and graduate students living in campus housing or who are on campus regularly are required to be tested twice per week. Graduate students who do not meet the requirements for testing may opt into the asymptomatic testing program. Staff who work regularly on campus are tested once per week; those at higher risk (e.g., healthcare workers, emergency responders, staff who cannot always maintain physical distance) are tested twice per week. Faculty who will offer in-person course elements or be on campus regularly are tested once per week.

Additionally, University Health Services has enhanced its Point-of-Care testing laboratory with molecular testing equipment that can detect SARS-CoV-2, Flu A, Flu B, and RSV simultaneously in less than 45 minutes, supporting rapid diagnosis of students with symptoms consistent with those viruses.

Vaccination

At the request of the State of New Jersey, Princeton will join other colleges and universities serving as fixed facilities, offering the COVID-19 vaccines to faculty, staff, students, most affiliates, retirees, and their households. Until doses are available for the University to hold its own clinics, the University will continue to partner with the Princeton Health Department to provide vaccinations to our campus community.

So far, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DOH) has authorized vaccination of individuals who meet the qualifications of Phase 1A, along with firefighters and police in Phase 1B. NJ DOH has not authorized vaccination of other higher risk groups in Phase 1B. By the end of January or beginning of February, most of our staff in group 1A who meet these criteria will have received their first dose of the Moderna vaccine through local partners. This includes staff

from University Health Services, Public Safety, and the COVID-19 testing laboratory, as well as our volunteer firefighters.

We await guidance from NJ DOH on what other positions and activities will be considered as essential. We'll begin running our own clinics as soon as we are permitted to order vaccines. More information about the vaccination program is available at <https://covid.princeton.edu/vaccinations>.

Scientific Modeling, COVID Statistics

As we prepared for the start of the spring semester, we updated our models based on the expectation of seeing the UK or other more virulent variants on campus. We worked with faculty and graduate students in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology to predict numbers of positive cases among faculty, staff, and students over the course of the semester, including the number of isolation beds we would need at any one time. The introduction of new variants into our models increased our pessimistic estimates from a high of 700 cases to 1000 cases, and isolation beds from 100 to 120, all within our planning boundaries.

For those who are interested, the COVID website includes a regularly updated dashboard with the [latest data](#) on symptomatic and asymptomatic testing, quarantine, and isolation statistics for the Princeton University community.

We hope this information is helpful as you continue your own planning for spring semester. And we hope you and yours continue to be safe and well. Our best to you all.