



## CPG Update: December 4, 2020

### SPRING SEMESTER 2021 GENERAL STATUS UPDATE:

With COVID cases once again on the rise and troubling projections being made as to what the next few weeks may hold, we are being reminded just how serious and dangerous this virus is, and of the vigilance required to keep ourselves and our community safe.

These trends have sparked some questions and concerns about our spring semester plan – both if it will hold up, and if we will truly be able to offer a safe environment for students come January. As part of our commitment to transparency, we offer the following assessment and thoughts for what this means for Washington College.

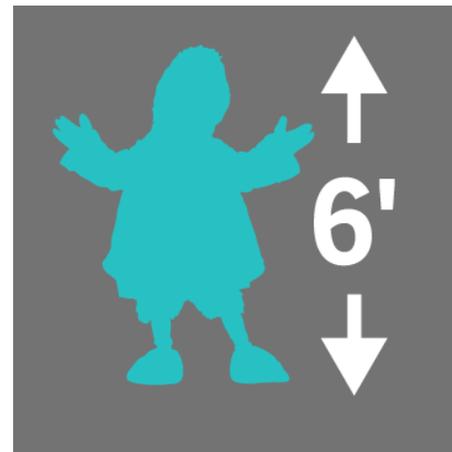
First and foremost, our top priority remains the safety of our students, staff, and faculty. This commitment to the well-being of our community has always been and continues to be the foundation for all of our decisions. It is in that spirit that we remain determined to preserve the opportunity to return because we acknowledge that for some, their overall well-being is best served by coming back to campus. With that in mind, the central question being evaluated during every step in the planning is, “How can we do this safely?”

The result of that due diligence is the de-densified housing model (one student per room), initial online instruction, a mandatory two week quarantine at home prior to arrival and then again upon arrival, routine testing, the ability to manage cases through contact tracing protocols and designated quarantine and isolation housing, and campus operations that will scale according to an Alert Level that will be evaluated daily.

We believe our plan is strong enough to withstand the unknowns, and are therefore continuing to do the work necessary to prepare for a return to campus for the spring semester. We have representation from every facet of campus life asking the important questions and developing the policies, procedures and protocols that will enable a safe return to campus.

Certainly though, there is much that we do not know. We don't know when or if the current rise in cases will begin to ebb. Nor do we know how the upcoming holiday season will contribute to these increases. We don't know how these trends will impact students' desire to return to campus. We don't know if the state or national public health conditions will still allow us to proceed with this return plan, and acknowledge the unfortunate reality that mandates out of our control may take the decision out of our hands altogether.

(Cont'd)



A couple of things to note about the return plan:

- In order to keep you informed, we will continue to provide regular CPG Updates throughout the break
- Any changes to the plan will be communicated by Jan. 8 at the very latest
- A change does not automatically mean all-remote operations; we are considering all Plan B options at this point, including adjusted move-in dates
- Students who prefer to remain home for the semester can absolutely do so, as online instruction will be available throughout the entire spring even if we are able to transition to in-person instruction after Spring Break.

In the midst of this unknown, we want to stress that there are concrete things we do know and have confidence in. Chief among them is that our ability to stay the course and welcome students back to campus is at least partially within our control. There are very specific, actionable things that we all can – and must do – right now to limit the spread of COVID-19, and following these best practices makes our path to re-opening much more achievable. Wear your mask, maintain social distance, avoid large gatherings, monitor your symptoms daily and wash your hands frequently.

Committing to the two-week quarantine prior to arrival is equally critical to our success. It's important that every student planning to return to campus or to Chestertown strictly observe this quarantine. If this is treated merely as a suggestion, the result could be an influx of positive cases and immediate high utilization of our Quarantine & Isolation housing. The impact of this would be an inability to set our Alert Level to one that allows for any sense of normalcy.

To state it plainly, if the collective Washington College community fails to comply with these standards now and over the coming weeks, our hopes of a successful return and any kind of meaningful campus experience will not be realized.

On the flip side, by embracing the things that must be done to set us up for success, then we are much more likely to have a manageable positivity rate from the outset. If our community observes the positive behaviors that will make us better together and we establish a stable community from day one, then we can absolutely foresee a successful on-campus experience for those who wish to return.

Be well,

-Contingency Planning Group



## **BETTER TOGETHER CAMPAIGN TO LAUNCH IN SUPPORT OF SPRING '21 SEMESTER**

The spring semester is going to be different for all of us – it will look different, feel different and the way we go about our day-to-day routines will be different. And the success of our spring semester depends on every one of us embracing this different approach and doing our part as individuals.

We can all contribute to the success of the next semester, and we know that as a flock, we are better together. Together we can embrace the positive behaviors that will lead to a successful on-campus experience. We will focus on the things we still get to do instead of the things that have been lost. We can do this because we'll be doing it together...just 6 feet apart!

So you'll be seeing signage on campus, social media content, videos and even some fun challenges that are branded under this campaign.

## COUNSELING SERVICES

Please note the below information and updates from the Counseling Center:

Counseling services plans to operate remotely during Spring semester.

- We will continue to provide 1-1 counseling, as well as group counseling as determined by student need.
- The College has a contract with a psychiatric Nurse Practitioner in place; however, she is on sick leave currently. We will keep you updated as we learn more from her about her availability. Health Services will work with students for prescriptions as they are able, and continue to make referrals out as needed for circumstances that require a greater level of expertise or intervention.
- We will continue to adjust our staffing pattern to accommodate student schedules.
- Emergency and crisis response will continue to be coordinated between counseling services, res life, public safety, and student affairs. Referrals to external resources will continue using our remote platform.



## HOUSING & MOVE-IN UPDATES

Here are some updates on topics related to Housing and Move-In dates for the spring semester.

**Housing Assignments** - the majority of housing assignments have been communicated to students. If you have not yet received yours, you should receive that update by early next week at the latest. If you have questions or concerns please feel free to email [Residential\\_Life@washcoll.edu](mailto:Residential_Life@washcoll.edu).

**Move-In Dates** - A staggered move-in schedule has been worked out by Residence Hall, and within the next week, students will be able to sign up for a specific move-in time. The ResLife Team will communicate directly with students once the sign-ups are ready. Please be aware that the move-in times you are going to be choosing from are specific to the Hall. So if you have requested a change, that will impact the move-in schedule.

**Change in Plans** - We understand that for some, the rising COVID counts may impact your desire to return to campus. And for others, you may have decided recently that living on campus is the right decision for you. We can still accommodate both requests. If your plans have changed, we would encourage you to communicate your decision ASAP, as it may have an impact on your financial aid package and/or your overall bill. Be aware also that for any student who moves onto campus but later decides not to stay, there will be no refunds. Housing refunds will only be issued if the College makes the decision to close.



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR SYMPTOMS

With the onset of cold and flu season and the similarities in symptoms related to cold, flu, and COVID, we found the above chart helpful in better understanding what is most common for each category of illness.

As always, if you are experiencing any symptoms, we encourage you to reach out to your healthcare provider and follow all guidance for a suspected positive COVID case (isolate, monitor symptoms, possible testing and communicate to those that you may have exposed.)

SYMPTOM CHECKER			
COVID-19, Flu & Cold			
Symptom	COVID-19	Flu	Cold
Loss of Smell/Taste	Common	Rare	Rare
Fever or feeling Feverish/Chills	Common	Common*	Rare
Cough	Common usually dry	Common usually dry	Mild/Moderate
Shortness of Breath	Sometimes	No	No
Muscle Pain	Sometimes	Common	Common
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Runny or Stuffy Nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common
Headaches	Sometimes	Common	Rare
Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	No	No	Common
Nausea/Vomiting	Sometimes	May occur in some, but is more common in children	No
Diarrhea	Sometimes	May occur in some, but is more common in children	No

\* Not everyone with the flu will have a fever

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