



*From the Office of the President  
Dr. Maria A. Lumpkin*



SAINT AUGUSTINE'S  
UNIVERSITY  
*Transform. Excel. Lead.*

## **COVID-19 Update: The Opening the Campus August 2020**

June 24, 2020

Dear Community Stakeholders,

Over the past few months, we have experienced unprecedented uncertainty as Saint Augustine's University and the rest of the world have confronted the spread of COVID-19. It has been amazing to watch our students, faculty, and staff quickly adapt to changes in the way we live and teach, especially the extraordinary efforts needed to take our courses online last semester and re-imagine the student experience virtually. Amid the painful issues of COVID-19 and the recent national focus on racism and social injustice, our mission is most timely and aspirational as we must continuously challenge ourselves and each other to live according to our highest values.

After much thought, and contemplation, the university has decided that we will open our campus in August to new and returning students and end the semester in November. As we prepare to open the campus for the Fall 2020 academic semester, the health and safety of our campus remains the most salient priority. The decisions that we have made were highly collaborative and involved a wide range of internal and external advisors and partners. We know that many faculty, staff and students have concerns about returning to in-person learning, teaching and work. We will continue to do all that we can to ensure that vulnerable members of our community are considered in our planning efforts. Units will work with individuals to every extent possible to address their concerns. Human Resources is the point of contact for all employee needs regarding COVID-19.

Our present plans and protocols are designed to help all of us experience the many benefits of being together while seeking to understand and mitigate the potential risk involved. Please note that we reserve the right to amend protocols as needed, based on the most current information and regulatory mandates that we receive. We will continue to share updates and shape our decisions accordingly.

Here are a few very important things about the university's plan for new and returning students, modifications to the academic calendar, delivery of instruction, campus life and the residential community, the Class of 2020 Commencement, and Homecoming 2020, that we want all of our stakeholders to know:

### **Key Points of our Re-entry Plan**

1. A modified term schedule that will limit our community's exposure to outside infections
2. Current and applicable social distancing measures affecting classes and campus life

3. Testing and infection tracing to increase community protection from viral infections
4. Policies and procedures that limit exposure risks within the community
5. For high-risk students and employees, modified attendance requirements when feasible
6. Intervention in the case of infections to reduce potential spread of the disease within our community

### **New & Returning Students**

- New students will come to campus for the Blue & White Week of Welcome on Wednesday, August 5.
- Returning residential students can move in on Saturday, August 8.
- Classes will begin in-person on Wednesday, August 12.
- Reading Day will be Friday, November 20.
- On-campus instruction will conclude on Wednesday, November 25.

### **Campus Life & the Residential Community**

Student Life is an important part of the student experience. While we will continue to have enriching opportunities for your development, our adaptive strategy will include the delivery of these experiences in more nuanced ways. I recognize that this may be a painful proposition for many of our students, who thrive on the interactions with others as part of their experience, however we hope to use the brevity of our harnessed creativity to provide a robust student experience. Housing and dining will be open for fall and we, along with our partners Aladdin are taking a number of steps to provide dining services. You can expect that self-serve stations and buffets will be configured differently. Over the next few days, we will be updating our COVID-19 website with updates on protocols for Campus life including Residence Halls, Classrooms, Student Activities, Athletics, Food Services, and Quarantining. Our plan involves multiple layers of protection.

### **Academic Affairs & Instruction**

We will resume in-person classes in the fall with safety and social distancing accommodations in place. Courses will be offered in-person, remote, and mixed instruction depending on curricular needs to meet the requirements of pedagogy. The Office of the Provost will work with academic units on the application of these guidelines to help ensure that the academic integrity of program needs are met. Should the university need to move to an exclusively on-line environment, we will use Blackboard as our platform. All new students will receive a laptop computer. We will work with returning students on their technology needs through our laptop campaign initiative.

The focus of this year's Faculty-Staff Institute will be on teaching and learning strategies to strengthen virtual instruction.

### **Changes to the Academic Calendar**

Fall classes will begin August 12, 2020, as previously scheduled, but fall break will be eliminated. The semester will end on November 25, 2020. Spring 2020 Classes will begin on January 6, 2021 and the academic calendar will continue as published, unless changes are warranted. The link to the academic calendar is [here](#).

### **Class of 2020 Commencement Cancelled**

Due to the closure of the campus in November, we will not hold a December Commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020 as previously announced. We apologize that we were not able to actualize this event, however all indicators are trending towards a possible resurgence of the pandemic in the coming months. We hope that all of our graduates were able to enjoy the Virtual Salute celebration in May. You can access the ceremony on the university's [YouTube Channel](#).

### **COVID-19 Contact Tracing, Monitoring, Mitigation, and Mandatory Masks**

The university has designated a core group of professionals, along with the universities executive leadership team to assist with the deployment of our campus COVID-19 emergency plan. The departments of Health Services, Public Safety, Human Resources, Public Health, and Student Affairs are all stakeholders in ensuring optimal safety for our campus. In addition, the university has designated a contact tracing staff member and has set aside living spaces to quarantine and care for those with significant exposures to others diagnosed with COVID-19.

Environmental cleaning is being handled by our master facilities provider, MPI. Across campus, hand sanitizing stations are in all academic and non-academic buildings across campus. These interventions, along with Tele Health support, washing your hands, and enhanced environmental procedures, mandatory face masks being worn on campus, as required by the City of Raleigh are important safeguards to control the spread of COVID-19.

### **Homecoming 2020 Virtual Event**

Due to COVID-19, the Blue & White Experience 2020 will be a virtual event. The Homecoming game will still occur with limited spectator capacity on October 24th. More information about virtual events and the game will be forthcoming from the department of Alumni Affairs, Athletics, and the Division of Student Affairs. The university's website, <https://www.st-aug.edu/coronavirus/>, provides the most up to date information on COVID-19. The FAQs are updated daily.

To this end, I invite you to pray for Saint Augustine's University to continue to be a pavilion of protected space to educate future generations and be a true alma mater (or "nourishing mother") in these trying times—a university that nurtures learners, leaders, and builders. Thank

you for your understanding, adherence, and support as we prepare for what we hope will be an excellent and productive year.

Falcon Pride,

*Maria A. Lumphkin*

Interim President