

Staff Campus Re-Opening Survey Summary with Administrative Committee Responses, July 2020

The following document comprises staff questions and concerns regarding re-opening campus for the Fall 2020 Term on the basis of an anonymous survey conducted by the Staff Forum Advisory Council at the request of the Administrative Committee (AC). The survey results were reviewed and discussed by the Staff Forum Advisory Council on July 9, 2020, and Sheri Gordon and Sam Cole, Staff Forum Co-Chairs, created a summary of the submissions. Please note that these are not the submissions themselves. If you would like to see the survey tool, emails sent to campus, or other information related to the survey, please contact either Sheri Gordon or Sam Cole. The AC's responses include references to policy documents that are (or soon will be) available on the College's [COVID-19 Policies and Communications](#) website.

QUESTION 1

Please enter any questions, concerns, etc. that you have regarding the [Healthy at Work Guidelines](#).

TESTING

A. When returning to campus, how quickly should I get a COVID test? (For example: "I got a test last month. Do I need another one?") Where can staff get COVID testing? Is this covered on our insurance? What can be done for those without insurance coverage or high deductible plans?

- Medical advice suggests that clearance tests be conducted within 72 hours of rejoining a community. However, the AC will allow tests conducted in the seven days prior to returning to on-campus work. The College requests that employees get the PCR diagnostic test when possible. Visit the [Madison County Health Department](#) website for a list of testing sites.
- Before the start of the fall term, the College will publish plans for a random COVID testing program for both students and employees. This random testing program is intended to help our community prevent the spread of the virus.
- There should be no charge for a COVID test; however, there may be a doctor's office co-pay depending on where the test was administered. Please contact Human Resources for reimbursement if you are charged a co-pay for a work-related required or requested COVID test.

B. How many cases will we allow on campus before evacuating again?

Please see the document [Metrics for Closing Campus](#) for information about the likely decision points for consideration of terminating on-campus operations should that become necessary during the Fall 2020 Term.

C. Testing is being required for staff returning to campus. What about staff who have been to campus full time or intermittently? Is there a requirement for staff/faculty/students who have traveled out of state?

- Employees who have been working regularly on campus since our closure in March do not need to get tested. However, all employees who experience [COVID symptoms](#) are expected to seek medical advice and remain at home until cleared to return by a medical professional.
- Although the College cannot make mandates related to personal travel, employees are also strongly encouraged to follow federal and state guidelines when considering personal travel such as vacations or family visits to ensure the health and wellbeing of the campus community. Before returning to work on campus, employees engaging in such personal travel are required to test negative for COVID or self-quarantine for one week before returning to campus, using vacation or sick leave if they are unable to telework.

EQUITY

D. Are faculty going to be required to abide by the same policies and procedures for requesting accommodations (i.e., working remotely)?

Yes, faculty are expected to work with the Dean of Faculty to determine whether their courses are suitable for distance-learning.

E. If faculty were provided additional pay over the summer, then other staff, especially essential workers, should also receive monetary funds. The vacation payout is not enough or fair. Essential workers cannot take off the time they have earned. Some staff have paid out-of-pocket for desks, chairs, printers, etc.

- The AC is considering carefully the question of compensation for staff employees, particularly those required to work on campus to accomplish their job responsibilities. More information will be shared in the near future.
- Telecommuting staff who have purchased items useful for working from home may be eligible for re-imbusement. For more information, please see the [COVID Home Office Policy](#).

F. How can the AC and campus leadership ensure consistency in communication? Staff and faculty are provided mixed messages. For example, a faculty member can come to campus at will, whereas a staff member may need to ask permission. This is widely variable among supervisors. Sufficient and consistent communication is indeed a challenge, as is consistency of supervision of employees. The AC has taken careful note of these challenges and their impact on employees and students and is working intentionally and as quickly as possible to address them. Marketing and Communications has also developed our new [COVID-19 Policies and Communications](#) website to serve as a resource for the campus community.

CLEANING

G. How can we ensure workspaces are sanitized with fewer staff and students in our offices? Will cleaning supplies and masks be made available? How should we enforce sanitation?

- Pending placement of on-campus labor students, Facilities Management (FM) staff and student workers will sanitize classroom spaces between uses.
- All faculty, staff, and students will be encouraged to clean and sanitize their own work areas. If such upkeep becomes difficult, please inform the AC member who oversees your area.
- Cleaning supplies, masks, and other PPE will be provided as necessary by FM to the campus community. For example, each student and on-campus employee will be provided with four re-usable cloth masks and will be responsible for keeping them clean through laundering. Please visit the [PPE Supplies Order Form](#) to request supplies for your area.
- Sanitizer will be placed in numerous locations across campus and Plexiglas applications will be installed where necessary (see also responses to 2E and 3E).

QUESTION 2

Please enter any questions, concerns, etc. that you have regarding performing your job duties to the fullest extent this coming fall.

REMOTE WORKING

A. There is general confusion as to whether staff are going to be required to come back to campus or if there will be an option to work remotely.

- Staff who must be on campus in the fall to provide effective services to students are expected to either meet their job responsibilities on campus or request accommodations with the assistance of Human Resources.

- During this unusual time, staff who are able to accomplish their job responsibilities through telecommuting will be encouraged to continue their work remotely in accordance with the Governor’s [Healthy at Work](#) guidelines.
- Supervisors are asked to ensure that employees in their area understand which of the two categories above applies to them according to their job responsibilities.

B. Public Schools are still making their decisions. What can be done for staff with school-aged children who will not be at school full time? Would children be allowed to come with staff to their offices?

The challenge of child care in this public health emergency situation is real and applies at nearly all work places—Berea College is no exception. The challenge will also likely evolve with the progress of the pandemic. The CDL is open now with safety measures for children, families, and staff, and most K-12 schools plan to open next month, but no one knows whether that can be sustained. Despite this complex issue, we expect to work individually with employees to adjust work requirements to address child-care issues. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Temporary Emergency Leave Policies - Faculty and Staff](#) for more information.

C. Can we be flexible in remote working? Or do I have to choose between full-time on campus, or full-time at home?

Hybrid arrangements may be possible for those who do not need to be on campus to meet their job responsibilities, but note that from the answer to 2A above, the preference is for those workers to limit their presence on campus. If you believe a hybrid option will be necessary to fulfill your job responsibilities in the fall, please discuss this option with your supervisor.

PUBLIC-FACING AND HIGH TRAFFIC POSITIONS

D. Social distancing will be very difficult for some staff. Staff who rely heavily on student labor will likely not be able to maintain the same level of productivity in order to limit interactions. There is also concern about exposure and wearing masks for 4 – 8+ hours each day for those in frequent contact with others.

The challenges of adjusting to mask wearing is real for all of us. As many experts have pointed out, we should all keep in mind that the inconvenience and discomfort of wearing a mask are far less significant than dealing with a serious case of COVID-19.

E. Questions about how to maintain common or more public areas in workspaces.

In common workspaces, we are adjusting the physical layout and adding Plexiglas barriers to allow multiple persons to work in the same space. Regarding public areas used as gathering spaces, the Governor’s Healthy at Work guidelines prohibit common spaces in work buildings at this point. We may have limited availability of such spaces for necessary in-person meetings, but you should assume that generally, indoor common gathering spaces will not be available.

WORKLOAD

F. Staff workloads will increase even further in order to enforce and maintain the Healthy at Work guidelines. Staff are already overloaded in many areas and could lead to negative and stressful work environments.

The AC certainly acknowledges these challenging realities. This will be a time for all of us to be supportive and understanding of one another as we work to continue the mission of the College.

G. Is the College sympathetic to staff not being able to complete tasks as quickly, or not at all? *“There is a difference between performing to the fullest extent, and performing to the fullest extent POSSIBLE.”* Staff are concerned their position may be cut if the position is not able to be as effective as when having in-person interactions. One was told “be on campus or find another job.”

- First, the AC does not condone the reported supervisor’s comment that an employee must “be on campus or find another job.” This statement is not consistent with Berea College’s Workplace Expectations. This is not who we are at Berea College, and it does not reflect the intensive efforts that the AC and others have made to extend as much flexibility and support to the community as we are able.
- However, we cannot avoid the requirement that many employees must be on campus in order to carry out our mission. If that requirement is not feasible for your particular circumstances, please talk with Human Resources. It may be possible to find accommodations. Please also see the [COVID-19 Temporary Emergency Leave Policies - Faculty and Staff](#).
- The AC agrees that “fullest extent possible” is a reasonable expectation for service in the present public health emergency. We would like to emphasize that, unlike at many other organizations, we are not expecting it to become necessary to cut positions. At present, the financial situation of Berea College is sound, and we were even authorized by the Board of Trustees to provide modest raises. Still, there remains much uncertainty and we certainly do need to exercise prudence and caution under the guidance of the Board of Trustees. No one at this point can rule out a major deterioration of the climate on which our financial health depends. Should that scenario develop in a significant or lasting way, we may be compelled to take measures to reduce our expenditures, but nothing of that sort is presently contemplated.

H. Not having students on campus will mean either some tasks do not get completed, or staff will need to take on even more work.

Yes, that is certainly a reality for at least the fall term. The expectation is that supervisors will work with staff to adjust expectations for what can be accomplished realistically with limited student labor assistance. The campus community must recognize that it likely will not be possible to achieve “business as usual,” even while we must all strive to serve our students and campus as effectively as possible.

I. When will labor supervisors know whether or not their students are coming to campus? Clarity is needed as to whether labor supervisors are able to supervise remotely.

Labor Supervisors with questions about the status of their student(s) and their labor assignments should please contact the Labor Program for information.

J. If students are not available for their labor positions, will we be provided with additional staff?

No, staffing increases are not contemplated with the exception of temporary hires in a few targeted areas. Rather, work expectations will need to be appropriately adjusted.

K. How can we ensure staff members without small children are not taking on extra work that parent staff members cannot attend to?

Adjustments for employees with children will be undertaken only to the extent that they can be done without introducing substantial inequities among staff based on family status.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED "CAMPUS?"

L. Are these rules being enforced at Boone Tavern? Forestry Outreach? Visitor Center? Partners for Education?

- In these outward-facing entities, such as the Boone Tavern, the Forestry Outreach Center, and the Visitor Center and Shoppe, we are following the Governor's guidelines with regard to such enterprises.
- The Governor's Healthy at Work guidelines and Berea College policies will frame workplace safety protocols for all Partners for Education staff (Barbourville, Corbin, Hazard, Middletown School, Mt. Vernon, Pike County, and Somerset). School-based PFE staff will follow the more stringent set of guidelines, whether those are the Governor's Healthy at School guidelines observed by the school district or the Healthy at Work guidelines observed by Berea College. Supervisors of school-based staff will ensure that all safety expectations are clearly articulated and monitored for compliance.

QUESTION 3

Please enter any questions, concerns, etc. that you have regarding use of PPE and your physical workspace.

ENFORCEMENT

A. What is being done with faculty/staff/students/visitors who do not abide by the [Healthy at Work](#) guidelines (i.e., social distancing, and properly wearing masks)? Concerns about other staff and students using PPE and following rules, as some folks are already seeing this not following protocol. Folks are also concerned about this trend continuing into fall and students and staff not practicing social distancing, wearing masks, following the guidelines given to them by Berea, etc.

- Please see the [Policy on Violations of Berea College Healthy at Work Standards](#) for information related to employees and students.
- A new healthyatwork@berea.edu email address has been created to report employee Healthy at Work violations and to express concerns about workspaces.
- Any student who has elected to take on-campus classes and therefore an on-campus labor position has indicated agreement with the following statement:
"I agree to strictly follow all of the College's policies, including but not limited to its Student Code of Conduct regulations and all extraordinary health and safety policies of the College during the COVID-19 public health emergency. I agree that any violation of this agreement may be grounds for my immediate suspension and withdrawal from campus."
- Student violations should be reported to LSL@berea.edu.
- Compliance will be strictly enforced, and all members of the community are asked to model good behaviors and diligently report non-compliance.

B. Who do we contact if we see someone not following these guidelines? What if a supervisor is enforcing something that we are uncomfortable with? Or not enforcing enough?

Please see 3A for reporting guidance. The entire community must be diligent and steadfast with its reporting of violations to contribute effectively to the safety of the campus community.

C. Does the College provide information on how the virus is spread? Too many people are not taking the virus seriously.

We will provide training on current information on how the virus is spread and why the measures in Healthy at Work are vital to the success of our re-opening plans. This information will be made available in the coming weeks.

AVAILABILITY AND USAGE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

D. Concerns about availability of PPE.

Facilities Management has worked to secure PPE for the campus community since April. Please see the [PPE Supplies Order Form](#) for more information. Please also see the [Facilities Management Campus Update](#) from FM Director Shane Wilkerson.

E. Request for information about when, where, and how to get PPE (masks, gloves, cleaning supplies, Plexiglas barriers), as well as what PPE will be provided and the timeline for Plexiglas installation.

Please see the link above in 3D to request masks, gloves, cleaning supplies, and Plexiglas barriers. The target date for installation of the barriers is August 11.

F. Questions about who will enforce usage of PPE among students, staff, and others.

We all need to encourage one another to use PPE and to follow the [Healthy at Work](#) guidelines. Please see 3A for more information.

G. Concerns from those who work in workspaces that are very small (too small to social distance) or who do not have HVAC systems or have outdated HVAC systems. Questions from folks working in these areas about possibly working from home or on alternating days or how to make spaces safe for student workers.

Workspaces will be rearranged so that adequate social distancing will be possible. Our HVAC systems are generally quite adequate for Healthy at Work purposes. It is true that our facilities do not meet the standards required in healthcare facilities, where advanced filtration can remove droplets and other particles from re-circulated air. It is very unusual to find this level of HVAC in non-medical buildings. To be safe at Berea College, we need to rely on following all guidelines when on campus and to avoid coming to campus if you are running a temperature, have [COVID symptoms](#), or have come in contact with an individual who has tested positive for the virus.

H. Request for training on how to use PPE and cleaning supplies. Will there be a standard used across campus?

Yes, training on the standards for sanitizing surfaces and spaces will be shared in the coming weeks.

QUESTION 4

Please enter any other general questions, comments, concerns you have about fall 2020 here.

A. Request for allowances to keep working from home. What would be requirements to continue doing so? When would folks be expected to return? Why do faculty get to choose, seemingly, and staff do not?

Please see the [Policy for Telework Requests during COVID-19](#). Supervisors are also encouraged to create opportunities for open conversation about telework requests versus on-campus responsibilities. Please also see the response 2A above.

B. Questions about how to make the CDL more supportive of parents in these times. Will the CDL close after Thanksgiving? Staff will need to be supported by being able to work from home again that that occurs.

The CDL plans to operate based on their normal calendar and is not scheduled to close after Thanksgiving. The tentative schedule, pending any new orders from the Governor, is:

November 25-27: Thanksgiving Break (CDL Closed)
December 21-22: CDL In-Service (Closed)
Dec. 23-January 1: CDL Closed-Christmas Break
January 4: CDL Resume Normal Operations

C. Questions about CDL protocol for opening, child illness, drop-off and pick-up times, and caring for higher-risk children. Questions and concerns about having to continue paying to keep spots in the CDL when parents are not/cannot utilize them currently.

- The CDL is taking every precaution possible, but everyone must make the best decision for their family. When a child at the CDL is ill, the child must be picked up within 30 minutes of the parent being notified, and the child will be separated from the group of children while awaiting pick-up. The CDL has a waiting area set up for sick children in Tammy's office, and space is available in Amanda's office as well.
- Drop-off and pickup times are challenging and can be inconvenient, but they are necessary in order to provide the safest situation possible for children, families, and CDL staff. The AC expects that supervisors will work with parents with children at the CDL whose work hours are affected by their scheduled drop-off and pickup times. As much latitude as possible should be provided to those parents.
- The AC recently decided, in collaboration with the CDL, that spots will be held for staff and faculty families at no charge through August. Beginning in September, families will need to pay for their child's spot if they wish to continue to hold that spot. This reflects the financial realities faced by the CDL, which is already expecting to run a significantly larger deficit in the current year than usual. Holding vacant spots with no revenue is simply not a workable option for the CDL financially.

D. Requests for essential workers to be paid hazard pay or a bonus, not just vacation time. Some essential workers feel unappreciated and stressed. Vacation time currently cannot be taken and may cause staffing shortages in areas.

The AC is considering carefully the question of compensation for staff employees, particularly those required to work on campus to accomplish their job responsibilities. More information will be shared in the near future.

E. Questions and concerns about limiting travel or social interactions, etc. for faculty and staff. While some feel like this might be a good idea, others fear it. Would people have to self-isolate after traveling? What about those who do not live in Berea?

Work-related travel restrictions for faculty and staff will be in place during the fall term. Any work-related travel must be approved by your division's respective Administrative Committee member and will be based on absolute operational necessity. Travel for in-person conferences and seminars is strongly discouraged. Please also see the response to 1C above regarding self-isolation following personal travel.

F. Concerns that staff and their issues with this reopening or reopening plan will not be taken seriously in this process or have been an afterthought.

The AC is sympathetic to and understands the concern and, in some cases, anxiety related to the decision to have students on campus in the fall. Admittedly, there is inherent risk in the decision, yet we have a responsibility to provide a high-quality educational experience for our students. For more information about the rationale for the decision, please see the [Response to Faculty and Staff Messages](#) document.

G. Concerns about increasing workloads for staff across campus and how to communicate that to others we regularly work with.

The AC strongly encourages supervisors and the community to be supportive and understanding of one another during this challenging time. When possible, work expectations will also need to be appropriately adjusted.

H. Concerns about students actually following guidelines and not being able to properly enforce or police them. At the same time, concerns about how students will get needed supplies and essentials if they are following guidelines.

Please see the response to 3A for more information.

I. Questions about what would happen if there were an outbreak/case on campus. Are there procedures in place for sending folks home? Isolation? Are there protocols of what others must do in these cases? What if this case were not a student, but a person visiting campus?

Please see the [Metrics for Closing Campus](#) document. If there are cases on campus, contact tracing, managed by the Madison County Health Department, will determine which employees and students will need to be isolated and tested. Isolation space is available on campus for students; employees will need to isolate at home on a paid leave basis.

J. Concerns about the Labor Program requirement for students who are on-campus and the small spaces some people have to work in with students, as well as needing supervision of students via staff. Will students taking online classes still not have to work?

- Employees who supervise on-campus labor students are regarded as mandatory for working on campus during the fall. All workspaces will be adjusted in order to facilitate the requirement of social distancing. If in doubt about your workspace, please email healthyatwork@berea.edu.
- The approximately 890 students designated as “Residential Students” and “Off-Campus Town Students” (e.g., those approved by Student Life to reside off-campus in Berea but take on-campus classes) must participate in the Labor Program. Distance-learning students are not required to participate in the Labor Program, but they may choose to have a remote labor position. Currently, approximately 60 distance-learning students have requested to be assigned to a remote labor position.

K. There were some concerns expressed about folks getting fired or furloughed or laid off due to health issues, not being able to work on-campus because of risk, or just due to the pandemic itself.

Layoffs and furloughs are not currently under consideration by the College. Please see the response to 2G above. Also, please see the [COVID-19 Temporary Emergency Leave Policies - Faculty and Staff](#) for those unable to complete their on-campus obligations.

L. Many are concerned with the decision to reopen the College and invite students back, period, especially with the number of cases of the virus rising.

Please see the response to question 4F above. Although certainty is impossible in the present circumstances, the AC is hopeful that robust adherence to the [Healthy at Work](#) guidelines will enable us to conduct on-campus instruction and activities at low levels of risk. We are also ready to adjust our stance as required by circumstances.