CFAES Town Hall Q&A

The information provided in this document represents guidance received as of August 11, 2020. Guidance is subject to change as we continue to adapt to changing circumstances.

COVID-19 General

Q: What is the overall university and CFAES goal in mitigating COVID-19?

A: Our overall goal is to keep our population as safe and healthy as possible. One of our central tactics is to continue to use telework as much as possible but recognize not all work to fulfill our mission can be conducted via telework.

Q: What specific scientific data does the university and CFAES rely on?

A: The college relies on the university regarding data translation to keep us consistent from college to college. As a research-extensive university, we rely on the research-driven advice from our colleagues in the Wexner Medical Center and College of Public Health to guide our decision-making. As well as following policies and orders from the Governor and health officials of the State of Ohio.

Q: At what point, if ever, will data be released about OSU reported cases, hospitalizations, and deaths? Is our private health data being used for research?

A: HIPAA guides use of medical/health data. Information about Privacy Policies can be found at https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/utility/footer/privacy-policy.

- There will not be research done using this data without following appropriate IRB procedures (link is external). https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/faculty-staff - fs-daily-health-check-faq
- The university's designated health monitoring team will be able to access data for university-wide health forecasting.
- Ohio State's testing strategy will include a tool that will enable the university to share aggregate information with the public in a way that protects individuals' medical and educational privacy. https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/testing-tracing-quarantine

Cleaning

Q: How will we assure classroom surfaces are cleaned between classes?

A: Regardless of the space (classroom, conference room, etc.) the safest assumption is that the space was not cleaned after its last use. High touch surfaces (e.g., door handles) will be cleaned twice daily. All classroom spaces will be cleaned overnight, but not throughout the day. Encourage students to clean their desks/seating areas when they come into the room. Facilities teams are planning to provide cleaning supplies/disinfecting wipes for each classroom so instructors and students who want to clean their space before using can do so. More information on cleaning for Columbus Facilities Operations Development (FOD) is available here: https://fod.osu.edu/covid-19-fod-response#faqs. Our operations team in Wooster is following similar protocols.

Facilities

Q: Why do labs of similar sizes allow different amounts of people?

A: Based on guidance from the University Office of Research, we asked TIU heads and PIs to use a guideline of 150 sqft per person in lab spaces along with an evaluation of the unique layout of each lab space to determine occupancy under COVID-19 restrictions. This calculation is based on available

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clear floorspace, not room dimensions. Factors also include both individual lab space (e.g., cabinetry, bench layout, access to equipment) and how occupancy in multiple labs adds up to building density with an overall goal of staying below 25%. For example, if one lab had 4 people in it, this might mean neighboring labs could have 0 to maintain low building density.

Q: How does the current CFAES financial situation impact the new Controlled Environment Food Production Facility and Multi-Species Animal Learning Center?

A: While Waterman remains a major priority for CFAES, University and CFAES leaders are carefully evaluating all capital projects to pause or defer to protect funds due to the current budget situation. We are currently evaluating funding and other factors prior to a decision on moving ahead, but both projects remain priorities.

Buckeye Pledge/Accountability/Testing

Q: Is the Buckeye Pledge a liability waiver to protect OSU from litigation?

A: The pledge acknowledges an understanding of and commitment to the behaviors described in the training. More information can be found on the Training and Pledge page.

Q: How do we make sure that breaking the safety rules have consequences? We have seen people without masks and not observing social distancing.

A: Accountability measures will be in place for those who do not complete the training and sign the pledge or choose not to abide by required health and safety guidelines. These accountability measures may range from additional training and informal coaching to formal disciplinary action based on existing structures for students, faculty and staff. They are available here.

Q: What is the plan to address staff/faculty who don't follow the approved return to work plan and schedule for their building?

A: In **singular instances**, we recommend patience and a simple reminder to your colleague of the plan or rules and mention the impact non-compliance has on the office (e.g., affects the ability to maintain required building capacity, creates concern for keeping appropriate physical distancing, may cause concerns about equity for additional access by others, etc.). There is much to track in this new mode of operating and we all will forget something at some point.

Although faculty and staff can always report anonymous concerns through the OSU's Anonymous Reporting Line (https://equity.osu.edu/), we strongly encourage employees to first work through their supervisors and HR Consultants in situations that **show a pattern** of not following plans and guidelines. A summary of accountability measures can be found at https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/faculty-staff#training-pledge-faq under the Training and Pledge section of the Q&A.

Q: Are supervisors responsible for auditing if employees are completing health checks? What actions will be taken if an employee isn't properly reporting their health data?

A: The health check app and dashboard is one of the various tools we are using to help enhance the safety of our faculty, staff and students as they return to campus. The health checks system will alert the employee and supervisor whenever a "red" condition should lead the employee to not report on campus. However, we recommend supervisors periodically review the health check system for two reasons. One, to determine if an employee who is reporting to campus is completing the check and two, to monitor density to make sure employees who are coming to campus should actually be on campus. We recommend that a **singular instance or infrequent instances** of not completing the check or reporting to campus too frequently and therefore raising population density be coached

with reminders. There's much to track in this new mode of operating and we all will forget something at some point. If there's a **clear pattern of behavior**, work with your HR Consultant. A summary of accountability measures can be found at https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/faculty-staff#training-pledge-faq under the Training and Pledge section of the Q&A.

Q: Who is the University testing?

A: Please reference the email from the president on Tuesday, August, 11. We received several questions on testing and the only information we have is what was shared from the University, so please reference those notices and the Testing, Tracing and Quarantine page.

Q: Can a face shield be accepted as a facial covering?

A: Masks are preferred unless there is a medical or communication reason for the shield. Click here for recommended alternative face masks that meet university standards and cloth mask cleaning guidelines.

Q: Are there medical exemptions for face mask use on the OSU campus?

A: Community members with particular needs for accommodations should contact Student Life Disability Services(link is external), the ADA Coordinator's Office(link is external) or the Office of Human Resources(link is external).

Q: Is there guidance on how to confront people not wearing masks?

A: Guidance on respectful face mask compliance

Students

Q: What plans, are there to support distance education for students in rural communities with limited internet availability?

A: The https://keeplearning.osu.edu/learning-tools/internet-access page includes resources on options such as public wi-fi, mobile hotspots, and parking lot hot spots.

Q: How many students does the University estimate to be on campus on a regular basis after moving so many classes online? In short, how crowded will campus be in comparison to usual?

A: As of Aug. 6 across all campuses, 46% of sections are being offered online, 31% are being offered in person and 23% are being offered through blended approaches. Students continue to make decisions about how they are approaching the fall, and about 9,300 have selected to take all online courses.

Q: Will there be any provisions made for students who live off campus and rely on CABS bus services that have now been cut?

A: Safety remains CABS top priority (learn more). Service changes for autumn semester go into effect on Monday, August 24, to limit capacity to support safety and physical distancing guidelines. Please review the service maps - https://ttm.osu.edu/sites/default/files/cabs-system-map.pdf

Service offerings are fluid and will continue to be updated to accommodate decisions regarding health, wellness and services on campus. Riders can track CABS buses in real-time via the Ohio State app (link is external). Mobility impaired individuals can utilize Ohio State Paratransit Services.

Q: When will the CFAES library, computer lab, and similar spaces be available for students to use?

A: In general, we are expecting many of these spaces to be open when the semester begins with limited seating and spaces available. Some seating has been removed or blocked off to support physical distancing. Common areas in buildings are being adjusted to reduce density while providing space for students between classes.

CFAES

OSU Libraries-Columbus Campus ONLY. More info https://library.osu.edu/COVID19
- Contact-free book return, limited local lending with contact-free pickup, and the scanning of articles and chapters from OSU print collections through the ILLiad Article Express service
- Statewide OhioLINK print borrowing/lending and ILLiad Interlibrary Loan physical item lending
- The FAES Library & SSC will reopen on August 25 from 10 am to 4 pm, Monday-Friday
- Questions or concerns about the library and library services can be directed to Florian Diekmann (diekmann.4@osu.edu, 614-688-8401) or Sara Chan (chan.575@osu, 614-292-6125).

The Wooster Campus Research Library.
- Contact-free book return and pick-up by appointment (including OSU and local collection).
- August 24: The WCRL library will reopen with pandemic operating procedures in place.
- Need service sooner? If you need to return items or would like to borrow items from the WCRL Collection prior to the August dates, please contact Gwen short.67@osu.edu.
- More details to be shared as we finalize our reopening plans

Q: Will there be pick-up points for return to campus kits for students not on main campus? When will these be available?

A: We will have pick up points on our CFAES Columbus campus, as well as the Wooster Campus. More information will be forthcoming.

Q: What is the procedure or protocol when one of our classmates tests positive? How many positive cases in a section is required before it is quarantined? Will we be notified of positive cases?

A: More information is coming regarding Contact Tracing at Ohio State at https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/testing-tracing-quarantine. Ohio State is establishing a contact tracing team to work with state and local departments of health. The federal law, HIPAA, establishes clear guidelines for protecting people's medical privacy and therefore, the college will not publicly be sharing information about anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. That communication process will be managed by the OSU contact tracing team.

Q: What support systems are in place for when students become infected and are unable to perform academic work for an extended amount of time?

A: The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services (SLDS). If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), they should notify their instructors immediately so they can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, students may register with SLDS and then make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614292.3307; slds.osu.edu

Teaching

Q: Students can opt to going virtual if at risk of COVID. We have faculty in the college at risk, are they being required to do face-to-face instruction? Is there flexibility with our faculty to switch to virtual?

A: If a faculty or staff member who is being asked to return to campus has concerns about their health or someone they live with, they should **immediately** request an accommodation through https://hr.osu.edu/coronavirus/accommodations/ (scroll down to the "Accommodation Request Process" dropdown for the link to complete the form). If a potential accommodation request could affect the modality of a class (e.g. face-to-face to online), the faculty member should reach out to the TIU head immediately.

CFAES

Q: Can we educate students not to take their frustration out on their professor?

A: A conversation around classroom expectations, with respect being part of that conversation, is quite reasonable. Consider setting the tone during the first week of class. Share how you, as the instructor, plan to show respect to your students (also consider asking them their expectations of you), and then share your expectations for how students should show respect to each other and to you. That is a perfect opportunity to request patience (and to share that you, too, will be patient with them).

Faculty

Q: **What are the plans for continuing support for junior faculty?** While the 1-year tenure extension was important and welcome, it doesn't fully address the impacts of COVID on pre-tenure faculty. In light of the renewed commitments made this summer toward diversity how will actions to be taken to ensure support and retention of these groups through this crisis?

A: The question above is complex and outlines the complexities of COVID with promotion and tenure, as well as the associated equity issues aligned with it. We have two major issues to collectively tackle. The first is a faculty resource issue and the second is a faculty governance issue as promotion and tenure is a faculty governance process. Our approaches (plural) need to recognize that COVID has affected each faculty member differently. COVID has changed how we think about many things and we will have to be vigilant about considering our processes and practices as a result.

We are looking to pilot a bias training for the promotion and tenure process. If adopted, such training will need to be modified to include bias mitigation techniques related to COVID. Secondly, faculty having struggles with their trajectory should discuss requesting additional tenure extensions. We recognize extension requests may compound issues, but we also need mechanisms to relieve stress and time. OAA has signaled they are open to these requests and the college leadership concurs. Thirdly, COVID-related university guidance has recommended the following: "*Faculty evaluation will continue to be a consideration during the changing dynamics of classes. In recognition of workload impacts of faculty modifying modes of instruction during calendar 2020 due to COVID-19, faculty responsibilities for calendar 2020 may be adjusted to increase the relative proportion of effort focused on instruction. For example, if a faculty member's normal responsibilities consist of 40% teaching, 40% research and creative inquiry, and 20% service, the proportion associated with teaching may be increased to 50%, with proportional decreases in research and creative inquiry, and service. The increased focus on instruction should be taken into account during annual reviews and in the Annual Merit and Compensation process conducted in 2021.*" College leadership has begun conversations related to implementing these temporary modifications in faculty effort so annual reviews and future reviews more realistically evaluate where faculty are being asked to place their time.

In the longer term, college leadership will work with FAC and the college faculty on a course forward regarding the promotion and tenure review process. We will likely receive university guidance on this as we move forward. We will have to monitor salaries for equity gaps more closely and more individually, as well.

Budget

Q: What is the University/College looking at as far as furloughs? Will there be retirement incentives for faculty and/or staff? What is the outlook for RIFs?

A: There are still many moving pieces in the university and college budgets. There are currently no plans at the College level to utilize the furlough option. Nor are the university or college currently planning on any Voluntary Separation Incentive Programs (VSIPs). Our goal is to reduce costs through natural attrition rather than implementing a reduction in force (RIF).

DEI

Q: What specific actions have been taken regarding diversity, equity and inclusion?

A: **Faculty Hiring**
- When a TIU (department/school/institute) proposes a new faculty position, they must outline their recruitment plan which include how they plan on recruiting a diverse pool of candidates
  - In the future, Dr. Patrice Dickerson will provide leadership with search committees in developing strong plans for recruitment
- Search committees must be reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of Faculty and Staff Affairs; part of that review includes looking for a diverse committee including areas such as dimensions of identity, discipline, and if applicable, campus (Columbus, Wooster, and Statewide)
- All search committee members must participate in an inclusive excellence training before participating
  - Over the last year, team members were directed to trainings that addressed outcomes of the inclusive excellence training. In the future, the program is being revamped to include tailoring specific to our college and up-to-date demographics of our current state of diversity
- Search committees are given a charge for the search including important broad components of an effective search and a reminder of important inclusive excellence tenets
- Proposed finalists for on-campus interviews are sent to the Associate Dean of Faculty and Staff Affairs and Assistant Dean for DEI to review for diversity in the pool and approval

Direct instruction through workshops
- Dr. Leo Taylor developed a wide variety of workshops for Columbus and Wooster campuses.
- He continues to work across campus in terms of collaborating with other presenters and by opening CFAES workshops for those outside the college.
- His latest project has been a collaboration with others across campus related to the anti-Asian bias brought about by COVID-19.

Redesign of DEI
- We renamed the previous CFAES Equity and Inclusion unit to CFAES Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). This subtle but important change is to embrace the scope of the unit's work and to recognize that diversity, inclusion and equity are separate but interconnected concepts.
- Dr. Patrice Dickerson has assumed the role of Assistant Dean and Director.
- We hired Dr. Leo Taylor to pick up the programmatic mantle.
- Alicia Baca began as a Program Assistant for CFAES DEI to support Leo's work.
- After spring semester, Pamela Thomas shifted and will still have a "dotted line" relationship with Office of Academic Programs.

Graduate Education

We have had a long-standing commitment to increasing diversity in our graduate student recruits. A couple of examples include the CFAES Diversity Associateship program and our active participation in the SROP program, both of which have been in place for many years.

Dean Kress has spent the last few years making considerable investments in our college's governance process – for faculty, staff and students. For students, she worked with student council to restructure their organization to focus more on being representational of our entire undergraduate student population. Our graduate students did not have such a voice, so she requested with our CFAES Office

of Research and Graduate Education to create a parallel council. We also created a Council of Councils which brings together representatives from these two student councils with our Faculty Advisory Council and our Staff Advisory Council.

Dean Kress announced the ***CFAES Principles of Community*** (go.osu.edu/principlesofcommunity) will serve as a base for managing these actions.

Other actions the Council discussed, and will be implemented include:
1. **A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council** – as part of the reframing for hiring Dr. Patrice Dickerson, we included in the position description that the Assistant Dean would create a DEI Advisory Council to more fully engage across our college's breadth.
2. **Equity Audit or Review** – some parts of our college receiving federal funds (Extension and OARDC) just underwent a USDA Civil Rights Review. We are currently working to address those findings. We will make that review report and our subsequent actions available to the full CFAES community. In addition, with Dr. Dickerson stepping into her new role, the Council and Dean Kress asked her to conduct an internal audit and share actions which are needed. Once we have addressed these reviews, we will look to the potential of having an external review done in the future to ensure progress is being made.
3. **Continuation of the Community Conversations** – Dr. Dickerson continued community check-ins with other groups within the college, including undergraduate and graduate students.
4. **Review other specific recommendations and map out plans with appropriate representatives within the college.** Over the next few months, the CFAES Dean's Office, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Council will be working in collaboration with advocates and allies across CFAES to identify specific action steps to work for sustainable transformation.
5. **Other items we will continue to discuss and work towards include:**
   - Coordinating a transparent grievance process for students.
   - Offering additional cultural competency trainings for all CFAES faculty, staff and students.
   - Continue working to implement a second embedded mental health counselor in CFAES in addition to David Wirt, CFAES' full time Mental Health Professional. This counselor would be based up in Wooster and we are engaging Counseling and Consultation Services.
   - We will continue ongoing communications to our community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni, about updates in diversity and inclusion.