

## **Blackburn College Return-To-Instruction COVID-19 Plan**

*The following plan is put forth in an attempt to retain as much of the intimate, personal, student-centered approach to teaching and learning that is the cornerstone of a Blackburn education while, at the same time, observing Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and keeping students and faculty safe.*

*Blackburn College calls upon students and faculty to adhere to safe practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the teaching and learning spaces. Social distancing and the wearing of masks in classes by both faculty and students is essential to protecting one another.*

### **Protection of faculty and students:**

- Face coverings (masks) are required to be worn in all public areas of buildings and when individuals cannot maintain social distancing practices. *This includes all classrooms and when meeting face-to-face with instructors, tutors, or classmates.*
  - Students and employees on campus who are unable to wear face masks must apply and be approved for a medical accommodation prior to being on campus without a mask. Please be aware that, in order to protect everyone on campus, very few exceptions to the campus face mask policy will be granted. Students should apply to Rachel Stull at [rachel.stull@blackburn.edu](mailto:rachel.stull@blackburn.edu).
- Students will be provided with face masks upon their return to campus.
- We do not suggest instructors conduct health checks as students enter the classroom.
- Academic-related travel for the Fall 2020 semester is suspended, unless approved by the President.

### **Course delivery:**

- Our first priority is to deliver courses in a face-to-face environment with appropriate safety precautions.
- If there are spacing constraints, our next priority is to offer synchronous learning, *i.e.*, forms of education, instruction, and learning that occur at the same time, but not in the same place for all students.
- Teaching modalities.
  - Fully in-person, face-to-face - Large spaces will be maximized so that in-person instruction may be facilitated safely. Students will be placed in assigned seating using CDC guidelines for distancing. Instructors will also be afforded sufficient distance to remain safe. Instructors who are able to deliver a class or classes fully in-person should plan contingencies for blended/hybrid and fully online as a precaution for transitioning to remote learning.
  - Modified-Hybrid Delivery - Some classes will use a mix of in-person and online synchronous delivery in order not to exceed safe classroom capacity. Instructors who deliver a class or classes fully in-person should plan contingencies for blended/hybrid and fully online as a precaution.
    - A rotation of students within the class, while using assigned seating, is recommended so that students will be able to benefit from in-person instruction while not exceeding safe classroom capacity.

### **Content delivery:**

- For the Fall 2020 semester, students may opt to attend Blackburn remotely. Those who wish to do so, and have not already, must inform the college of that decision by emailing the Provost at [john.mcclusky@blackburn.edu](mailto:john.mcclusky@blackburn.edu) as soon as possible. Students without necessary technology will have it supplied by Blackburn and must inform Dr. McClusky as soon as possible.. Students may switch to remote learning at any point during the semester by emailing the Provost. Students who have elected remote learning may not return to face-to-face learning during the semester without approval by the VP Student Affairs and the Provost (students will be allowed to return from quarantine).
- Students will be attending the large majority of their classes in person with the instructor.
- Due to restrictions on class sizes, there are a few classes that will be a combination of face-to-face and virtual learning. That is, on any particular day, some of the on-campus students will be in the classroom with the professor and other on-campus students will be attending remotely from their rooms. Those attending remotely will rotate among the students in the class so all students get the same amount of “in-person” time. Students will be informed soon about the format of all classes.
- A few classes will be taught remotely, ie. with the professor interacting via remote technology from their home. Students will be informed soon about which classes (if any) will be taught remotely. Some of these classes will require all students to meet at the same time in person or via zoom or google classroom; others will be fully online classes, while others will be a mix of the two.
- All students learning remotely will be required to attend all face-to-face classes synchronously, ie. at the same time as face-to-face students, to maximize the learning experience. Remote students will attend class through technology such as Zoom or Google Meet, and will be able to view and hear the class as well as be seen and heard by classmates and the instructor. Remote students will have the same responsibilities as face-to-face students. All classes will have a strict, masks-only policy, and social distancing will be enforced. Students who do not comply with these policies may be removed from campus and transitioned to remote learning.
- While classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily, the short period of time between classes will not allow College staff to clean classrooms between classes. For this reason, students will need to clean their desks/work area upon arrival in class. Cleaning materials will be available.
- To facilitate contact tracing, students will have assigned seats in every class and attendance will be taken every day. All seats will be at least 6' from any others.
- In the event that the pandemic situation requires the campus to move to a remote status, all instruction will revert to fully online similar to Spring 2020.
- In the event that the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) requires campus to disband, all instruction will revert to fully online similar to Spring 2020.

### **Classroom setting and considerations:**

- Room capacity and safety
  - Room capacity with 6' social distancing is roughly  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the normal capacity.
  - Additional teaching spaces that will safely accommodate in-person classes will be put into use.
  - Classrooms will be rearranged to accommodate socially-distant 6' spacing between student desks/seating and the instructor.

- Some courses which involve known “super-spreading” activities such as singing, acting, or dancing will have additional spacing and personal protective requirements, or remote-only class formats.
- Attendance data is essential for contact tracing. Therefore, instructors should develop seating charts and take attendance daily. For classes which must cycle on-campus students through remote learning, seating can be facilitated by taking a photo at the beginning of each class.