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5-15-2020

## Coronavirus Update 5-15-20

The Coronavirus Planning Team  
*Sacred Heart University*

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## **Coronavirus Update 5-15-20**

Dear members of the Sacred Heart University community,

This week we want to provide some more information about the University's planning for the coming semester. There are many details still to be finalized, but we want to give you as much information as we can to help you with your planning. As you might expect, Sacred Heart is following the guidelines recently provided by the governor for the reopening of universities as well as guidance from health experts.

The health and safety of the SHU community has always been our top priority in concert with ensuring the academic continuity that allows our students to complete the requirements needed for their chosen degrees. We recognize that providing an opportunity for students to interact, build friendships, participate in clubs and activities and develop bonds with faculty members is a critical part of the college experience and woven into the fabric of life at Sacred Heart. While there will need to be procedural changes for everyone's safety, we are determined to provide those experiences to students.

### **The Fall Semester – Introducing SHU-Flex**

Sacred Heart is planning to begin fall semester classes as planned on Monday, August 31. However, as part of a plan that we are calling SHU-Flex, we are condensing the undergraduate academic calendar for safety reasons. We are eliminating the Columbus Day weekend break, but plan to conclude the semester before Thanksgiving break. The plan ensures that students receive the same number of instructional hours as always, with no changes to their already assigned course schedules, but will mitigate risk by limiting trips back and forth to campus that may require additional testing and possible self-isolation. Since most of our graduate students are nonresidents and would present less risk, the graduate calendars will not change, although graduate programs are encouraged to complete on-ground activities before Thanksgiving when possible. This plan is based on the University's goal to achieve the following:

- Maintain a safe campus environment through social distancing requirements and other risk-mitigating procedures
- Maintain teaching excellence whatever the circumstances
- Comply with all accreditation standards and guidelines
- Mitigate health risk and minimize travel to home during the semester for residential undergraduate students

To plan for all contingencies, SHU-Flex ensures that the University's faculty will be prepared to deliver course material both face-to-face and virtually to allow for flexibility for students in various circumstances as well as social distancing requirements. It also enables them to seamlessly switch to alternative modes of teaching at a moment's notice should a spike in the virus require a change in plans.

In preparation, faculty will participate in development courses and workshops beginning immediately and continuing throughout the summer. We had to pivot quickly this past spring with very little warning, and students and faculty alike did an exceptional job of adapting to the necessary changes. With the time we now have to plan and prepare, we are confident that our hybrid classes will allow for the same close connections with your professors and fellow classmates that we know you value. Our faculty members are excited about the creativity that a hybrid format allows for classes to be more engaging and challenging than the traditional format. And should we need again to move fully online, you will find the experience robust and interactive.

### **Health and Safety**

The wellness task force is also preparing for reopening with the purchase of more than 50,000 masks, along with 30,000 gallons of hand sanitizer, face shields and thermometers, the installation of 80 hand sanitizer pumps at building entrances, signage for social distancing and acquisition of tests. They have also made plans for contact tracing and containment should someone test positive.

In addition, the University is working with its cleaning company, SSC, and carefully planning and implementing comprehensive and frequent cleaning and disinfecting protocols as recommended by the CDC and the American College Health Association for reopening institutions of higher education in the COVID-19 era.

Some additional protocols from the wellness task force that you may see in place include, but are not limited to:

- Mandatory wearing of masks outside of dorm rooms and offices
- Extended move-in period
- Limited guests on campus and between residence halls
- More takeout and mobile ordering options from dining halls
- Specified working areas for study groups that are easily sanitized
- More creative use of indoor and outdoor spaces, such as outdoor liturgies as weather permits
- Use of video for class guest speakers and colloquia

We realize that some of this information is very broad. The task forces are working hard to develop these plans, and we will continue to share their decisions in these weekly updates.

### **University Staff**

Although the governor has indicated that university business offices can start to reopen beginning Wednesday, May 20, Sacred Heart will not immediately transition staff back to campus. It will be done in a thoughtful, careful way while keeping the safety of everyone in mind. More information about staff transitioning will come from HR by the beginning of June.

### **Housing and Meal Credits**

The student accounts team has completed the process regarding housing and meal credits. Billing statements have been published for the applicable students. Please review your student account information by logging online at [www.sacredheart.edu/studentaccounts](http://www.sacredheart.edu/studentaccounts). Requests for refunds of the meal plan credit may be submitted online at the student accounts website.

Congratulations again to all who received their degrees through the conferral ceremony last weekend. We continue to look forward to the on-ground ceremony that the commencement committee is planning with class of 2020 student leaders.

As we continue to evolve in response to the world we now live in, we are determined to preserve all that makes us the close, caring community we have always been. We are Pioneers, so we will be bold, innovative, creative and resilient. Some things may be different, but we are still the same—immersed in our mission, our traditions, our inclusiveness and our love for one another. See you in the fall.

The Coronavirus Planning Team

This message was sent to the following groups: !Students-Juniors-FullTime,!Students-Seniors-FullTime,!Students-Sophomores-FullTime,!Campuswide-Employees,!Graduates-Commencement2020-UG,!Graduates-Commencement2020-GR