

Furman Virtual Town Hall for Students and Families, Oct.19

Transcript of live Q&A chat

Question: Not a question but a comment of support and admiration for the thoughtful, well managed approach all of the Furman team have provided - from the top of the university all the way to the dorm RA's. Impressed, and grateful. You are a model. Publish something about it!

Answer: Very grateful, thank you. It's a team effort and our students have been fantastic!

Question: Will professors be encouraged not to load up on homework over the one-day holidays? If not then the "holidays" are useless to give a mental health break.

Answer: Instructors are being encouraged to treat these days as "breaks" for themselves and students. These are being emphasized as opportunities to recover from the demands of the semester. Going into the Spring, instructors will be able to construct their schedule to help students fully take advantage of these breaks.

Answer:

Professors are well aware of the tolls that the pandemic is taking on students, and we've received positive feedback from them on the inclusion of break days in the spring. Many professors assign work well in advance, so students will be free to use their days off for working on their work at a pace that works for them. But if they need a break, they should take it, and we will be engaging faculty consistently on this topic.

Question: Are students required to get the flu vaccine?

Answer: Students are encouraged but not required to get the flu vaccine. There have been several opportunities to obtain the vaccine free on-campus.

Question: Will students have a chance to get a Covid test before coming home for Thanksgiving?

Answer: We are discussing that this week. More soon about that.

Question: Speaking of the mental health of the students, Furman is being termed by a number of students as being a "police state" or "locked down" - especially relative to other schools, some of which are much larger. Are there plans to allow for more socialization among students in a responsible way, especially given that the number of cases at FU is very low?

Answer: Chief Milby and I [Jason Cassidy, Dean of Students] will be speaking to this question shortly. If you still have questions afterwards, please just let us know.

Question: When do you think will be the deadline date for Maymester's before they will have to cancel them?

Answer: For study away, the deadline for student applications is January 26. We expect to make a decision about international MayX study away programs sometime by the end of December.

Question: I was just wondering if y'all considered, that instead of having the delayed week in January, to use those days to add additional one day breaks throughout the semester? I know a few students have reflected that they would prefer that, but I also understand the caution we want to take after winter break. Just curious!

Answer: We definitely considered this option. We actually looked into several models. In the end we thought this option helped balance providing a longer winter break, allow for more time away from campus during typical flu season, have some breaks during the semester and finishing at a reasonable time.

Question: When is Spring registration for the current Freshman?

Answer: Spring registration for our current first year class opens on November 10th.

Question: Given the limited number of work study jobs available to students, particularly freshmen, what will be done to assist students who were counting on those funds to meet their financial needs?

Answer: We understand how critical federal work study opportunities are to our students. We have also transitioned some of our student positions from in-person to remote where possible, but the pandemic has greatly limited our employment options for students due to the safety concerns. There are several job opportunities listed on our Student Employment website. https://furman.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/Furman_Student_Careers/1/refreshFacet/318c8bb6f553100021d223d9780d30be

Question: Also comment of support - My kiddo attended virtually this fall out of safety concerns, but looking forward to returning to campus this spring. Thank you to everyone (staff, students, administration) for all you have done to keep all safe during this terrible time.

Answer: We greatly appreciate the kind thoughts, and we look forward to welcoming your student to campus.

Question: Does Furman have any plans to increase education about how serious the virus can potentially be? As a student on campus, I know that many students (based on what I've seen and heard) are not taking this seriously and are willing to risk the health of other students because they don't think it's a big deal for our age groups.

Answer: Hi [Participant]. Will you reach out to Stephanie Boyd at stephanie.boyd@furman.edu. She is leading our efforts on student messaging and education/training. Several students are helping us with that work. Would love to have your insights. Thank you.

Question: How are you thinking ahead to housing choices for Fall 2021? So much of spring semester is about making the connections (Greek life, etc.) that make up roommate selections, but many of the students are not participating in those for safety. How will you link up students to have positive living situations when many have been remote, etc.?

Answer: Our online housing management system has roommate finder feature that allows students to connect with others. Many students use this feature annually. Additionally, our housing assignments team will continue their high-touch approach to help students connect with others to have confidence in their roommate relationships next year.

Question: Will you stagger the students return in January.

Answer: There are no plans for a staggered return in the Spring as we had this past fall. We are making plans for a slightly expanded move back in window to maintain a low density on campus during those days.

Question: Will spectators be allowed at sporting events (like Football)?

Answer: Yes, but in smaller numbers. We are allowing some student fans this week for Purple and White scrimmages.

Question: Will all students move in at the same time in January or will it be staggered?

Answer: Transfer students will move in on January 15. Students who were not on-campus in the fall will move on January 16. Returning students (students who lived on-campus in the Fall) will move in on January 17 and 18.

Question: Please clarify—if recruitment is virtual, do students NOT return early as usual?

Answer: That is correct. Students will not need to arrive early for recruitment.

Question: Will Greeks (specifically sororities) have to come back early even though semester is starting later due to recruitment—

Answer: No, students participating in recruitment will not need to (or be allowed to) return early.

Question: Has a timeline been put in place for Greek life recruitment?

Answer: Specific details (dates, etc.) are being planned by Panhellenic and IFC and will be available soon. Registration for both recruitments is open and links can be found on the Greek Life website.

Question: In addition to my current Furman student, our older daughter was in the class of 2020. What is being considered for that class since the October 31 planned commencement has been canceled?

Answer: We were most disappointed to not be able to safely hold commencement exercises for the Class of 2020 on October 31 as originally planned. We have prepared a survey for graduates and we look forward to hearing from them about how best we can celebrate their accomplishments. I expect the survey to go out very shortly if it hasn't gone out already.

Question: Will you be considering opening the pool in any capacity in the spring?

Answer: Sorry hit wrong button. But this question will be addressed in the live forum. If you still have questions please feel free to bring those back up here.

Question: Will students in South Housing be allowed to visit students in Clark Murphy Housing and vice versa next semester?

Answer: We are evaluating the housing visitation policy this semester for any possible adjustments for the spring semester.

Answer: At this time, we don't plan to change our visitation policy for next semester.

Question: How are we going to handle socializing/eating as the weather gets colder? It'll still be pretty cold in the beginning of spring semester

Answer: Jessica is answering now

Question: Instead of random testing, have you considered rotating through the student body? I know some students have been selected for testing 3+ times and others have not been randomly selected at all. Many campuses use an alternating system with roommates/suitemates

Answer: Our understanding from the epidemiologists with whom we are working is that a random model is the best way to allow us to determine any potential areas of concern. The students are selected at random, but represent all housing areas, class years, etc. We also have

the capacity to oversample from specific groups, housing units, etc., if a higher than expected positivity rate is measured. It is of course also true that the test is only of value on the day the sample is taken, i.e., a student can become infected a day later with the same probability of a student not tested at all. (The primary purpose of asymptomatic surveillance is to have an understanding of disease prevalence campuswide rather than identify specific individuals per se).

Question: When will the students be required to vacate the dorms at the end of this (Fall) semester?

Answer: Saturday, November 21

Question: will club sports be happening spring semester?

Answer: We are convening a group to review the club sports regulations and exploring what is feasible and safe for the spring semester.

Question: Will club sports be offered Spring semester.. specifically, Golf?

Answer: We are convening a group to review the club sports regulations and exploring what is feasible and safe for the spring semester.

Question: Will there be expanded food options in the dining hall? If not, can we move to a non-unlimited plan? Our student has a lot of unused swipes.

Answer: Koren Nappi will address shortly.

Answer: Yes, as of today, we have gone back to all of our food stations offering unique options rather than the duplicate menus at each line. The salad bar and the waffle and breads bar opened today. Bread and Bowl also went back to its full menu today and still offers the individual pizzas. We are also planning special events on Monday's from our catering truck and Wednesday evenings under the Milford Mall Tent. There will also be special holiday dinner events. Hope you like the changes we have implemented.

Question: For Griffin-

How have you addressed the heavy handy FUPPO presence?

Answer: SGA meets regularly with FUPPO, and we will continue to work with them and Student Life to better understand the police protocols and presence on campus.

Question: Can you spray or treat for mosquitoes? Kids being out all the time and our daughter is getting bit up.

Answer: Please have your student submit a work order to Facilities Services at workorder.request@furman.edu

Question: How are the kids being made aware of these activities? My dght signed up for the Outdoors Club and I don't think she knew about it?

Answer: SGA sends out weekly emails with information, along with Student Life. The club Instagram's generally post information as well. Also "SyncDin" our event platform on MyFurman has information!

Question: Another comment of support to Furman for a stellar job of bringing the student body back to campus and allowing college life to go on as best as possible, albeit differently. It has been so encouraging to see how well and safely it has progressed. Kudos to you all for your hard work and efforts and I am sure endless hours of thoughts going in to how on earth to accomplish this.

Answer: Thank you for the kudos.

Question: With facilities like the amphitheater and McAlister auditorium will there be ANY opportunities for choir and orchestra to perform with a socially distanced audience? Zoom performances are NOT the same. :(

Answer: The Covid-19 Steering Committee has been in regular contact with the leadership in our Music, Art, and Theatre Arts Departments, and we expect those channels of communication to remain open. There have been some recitals, with in-person attendees, since the number of attendees fell within the permissible limits. It's not yet clear if and when audiences can expand for larger ensemble performances.

Question: more of a side note: Can we make clear guidelines about what constitutes as an acceptable mask for campus safety? It's scientifically backed that certain types of "face coverings" are not nearly as effective of protecting against the spread of germs/COVID as face masks, but I still see a lot of people not wearing proper face coverings

Answer: Excellent question, we will continue to educate through our Education and Training group whenever possible. We have also put this information on the website, i.e., at least two layers, fitting snugly over both the mouth and nose.

Question: Will community kitchens be open in the Spring?

Answer: Our decisions regarding community kitchens are based upon the guidance applied to our campus environment. At this time, we don't see support in the guidance to open them, however as soon as we do, we will open them for students.

Question: will NV students have the option of a smaller dining hall plan in the spring semester?

Answer: North Village students will be able to choose from a 160 or 110 meal plan in the spring semester.

Question: also, can we get vegan cheese at bread and bowl? and more vegan options in the pden <3 pls <3

Answer: Asha, please stop by the dining hall and ask for Koren or Tony to discuss more vegan options for both Bread and Bowl and Pden.

Question: I appreciate all this information but how is this same information being relayed to our students? I have attended several zoom's over the summer, during "Parent's weekend", etc... yet when I discuss with my daughter, I seem to know much more information that she does. I wish perhaps this recording (as well as previous ones) were offered as a CLP (as an incentive) or something similar.

Answer: This townhall recording will be available on the Furman Focused website. Dr. Peterson and VP Carson send out an email at least once per week with updates from the Furman Focused email address. Many campus organizations and centers communicate via email with students.

Question: How are these changes in the dining hall communicated to the students? As well as all offerings? Daughter unaware.

Answer: The changes have been included in the bi weekly student newsletter. Our partners in Student Affairs and SGA have been also helping us push these changes out to the students. We are also using social media to reach the students as well.

Question: Ms. Nappi- What days are the evening food trucks? I missed part of your explanation.

Answer: The Snatch a Snack truck will be on Monday evenings and starts at 9 pm. It will be coming the parking areas of the residence halls.

Question: What are the days and hours that the Library is open?

Answer: Library hours are included on this website: <https://libguides.furman.edu/library/hours>

In case Furman network logon is required for accessing this site, regular hours are as follows: Sundays noon-10:00 pm, Monday-Thursday 8:00am-10:00 pm, Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm. The library is closed on Saturdays.

Question: Will there be any concrete steps taken to reduce the student level of academic stress that is obviously a huge problem on campus? Some schools have "mountain days" or other spontaneous, surprise days off, where faculty are not allowed to assign work to students. Our students need a break - we're hearing it loud and clear but it just doesn't feel like the faculty are hearing it.

Answer: Thanks for this feedback. We've been in close communication with faculty about the steps that they are taking to ensure that students are progressing through their courses while being properly connected to appropriate support resources. Dean Longest's offices can help any student get connected to those resources if assistance is needed. (Students can email him directly at kyle.longest@furman.edu.)

Question: I know that for the food - some areas are extra "swipes" for food. Since it is harder right to get food due to restrictions, has there been any thought to allowing students to have that restriction lifted? Or about the possibility of being able to not have to be so exact about their amount of swipes?

Answer: Each outlet outside of the dining hall has a meal equivalent option for the students to purchase. If a student purchase something other than the meal equivalent items, they can use their Paladin Points that comes with their meal plan. The Monday evening snack truck events and the Wednesday evening events in the Milford Mall tent are free options and do not require a swipe.

Question: What does the Paladin Promise say about working off campus?

Answer: We cannot prohibit students from working off campus or traveling off-campus to go to the grocery store, restaurants, etc. We encourage students to limit contacts, mask, etc., as much as they can while off-campus.

Question: Chief Miley- where can we locate your data? You have students on edge (and parents)?

Answer: Mr. [Participant], not sure what data you are referring to, but I would welcome a conversation if you would like to call or email me. My direct line is 864-294-3555.

Question: Will you be providing statistics on the number of students that have needed therapy and how many of those visits result from FUPPO related activity or PP reporting? Why are the police responding to noise violations? Seems like that should be handled by an RA

Answer: Mr. [Participant], some reports of minor violations are handled by RAs, but others come directly to campus police for a variety of reasons. These complaints are always filed by students, so we try to be responsive to their concerns.

Question: Will consolidation in apartments occur in the Spring as they did in the Fall? If one or two roommates in an apartment choose not to return, will random roommates be assigned to that apartment?

Answer: It's difficult to know right now whether or not we will need to do any consolidation. Our goal is first to be sure we have enough fully vacant suites and apartments to use for quarantine/isolation space. Next, our priority is to be able to house all students who want to be on campus for in-person instruction. Consolidation will only occur if necessary to satisfy those priorities.

Question: What types of things has the anonymous reporting system been used for in the past?

Answer: Students have used it to file noise complaints and other possible conduct violations.

**Question: KAREN NAPPI-
Where are the food trucks located on Monday nights?
Thx**

Answer: The Snatch a Snack truck will be come to the residence hall parking areas on Monday evenings starting at 9 PM.

Question: Will students need to submit a negative test before returning for second semester?

Answer: Yes, and we will provide more information later in the fall about that.

Question: Anonymous reporting is dangerous and not fair. You need to be able to question the anonymous person reporting violation.

Innocent until proven guilty- your process is the reverse.

Answer: Totally appreciate your comment. We investigate anonymous reports, but they are adjudicated by student life, and accused students have the ability to respond to the allegations.

Question: Are classrooms available for students to use?

Answer: Academic buildings remain open until 7 PM during the week but are locked thereafter and on weekends to ensure cleaning and sanitization protocols can be executed.

Question: For Chief Milby, Is the Furman Police department open to a dialogue with students about allowing amendments to the drinking rules on campus for of-age students? As it currently is written, drinking is only allowed inside of apartments in North Village, which can enable an unsafe environment of too many people in the apartment. Would supervised drinking outside in the area of North Village be something that can be implemented so that

students can engage in actions, that are ultimately going to happen regardless of what the rules say, but in a safe manner that promotes being outside and socially distancing? Let's be honest, college kids are going to drink. Why not give them some options to do so on campus, safely, so that they do not resort to traveling to bars or throwing parties in apartments.

Answer: Yes, that is a conversation being had with Student Life, campus police, and others. I think the pandemic delayed that initiative.

Question: When do academic buildings open in the morning on weekdays?

Answer: 7:00 am.

Question: If it is safe for our students to be on campus, why are support administrative departments such as enrollment services, academic affairs etc. still working remotely?

Answer: We are implementing procedures within given health and safety advice to maintain as low of a density on campus as possible. One method is to have work that can be accomplished remotely done so. If a student has a concern that cannot be addressed remotely, I would encourage them to contact that office and ask for specific possibilities to still achieve what they are seeking.

Question: Will all students return to campus in January or will be a staggered approach?

Answer: All student will be able to return in January. There will be a window of assigned days to move back to campus, which will be provided to students.

Question: will students that were remote learning first semester be moving into the same dorms/rooms that they were planning on in August?

Answer: Yes, they will keep their original housing assignment.

Question: Are there any plans to address the FUPO/student relationship and interactions?

Answer: Yes, definitely, this is a huge priority for us. We have created a police advisory committee comprised of students, faculty, and staff, and we also meet with student organizations and individuals in an effort to encourage open lines of communication.

Question: My son has an 11-hour drive. Will he be allowed to move in after 5pm on Jan 17/18?

Answer: Yes. Please have him send an email to housingandresidencelife@furman.edu and we'll work with him.

Question: Will the unlimited meal plan be mandatory in the spring?

Answer: Yes, for students living in South Housing and Lake Side Housing.

Question: students are being quarantined in NV beneath my son's apartment. How do we know there is a separate air system? Is NV the designated quarantine?

Answer: A quarantine space in a shared housing system is defined as a bedroom not shared with another person that has private access to a bathroom not used by another person. The spaces available across campus are not centralized in any building to separate students in quarantine or isolation from other students living on campus; rather, they are rooms, suites, and apartments we could re-assign for quarantine and isolation purposes prior to opening in August. In fact, we have many other spaces available across campus throughout our housing inventory. In some instances, a student required to quarantine for a short period of time may be allowed to stay in their suite-style or apartment-style bedroom, provided no one else is staying in those spaces and using the bathroom.

Question: I want to commend Bon Appetit on all the offerings. Some normality and fun in a difficult time. Thank you!

Answer: Thank you [Participant]! We will let the staff know. They take pride in serving our students.

Question: What is going on with the problem with WIFI on campus? Specifically, the "get app" and WIFI on phones has not been working.

Answer: Thanks for this feedback. I will forward this on to a colleague in Information and Technology Services.

Question: If my daughter was scheduled to study abroad Spring 2021 and now that this is cancelled, what is the likelihood that she will stay in the location/room she is currently in for Spring 2021 (thus eliminating moving all her belongings back to PA and back to SC again, unnecessarily)

Answer: It's difficult to say without looking at her specific assignment. Please have her contact Dr. Curtis Nash and he will gladly help her with this.

Question: Will there be an opportunity to review meal plans and make adjustments if there will leftover swipes since many were not given a choice other than unlimited???

Answer: Meal plans are assigned by where you are living. Unlimited plan is assigned to South Housing and Lakeside Housing. North Village has is assigned the 160 and has the option to go to the 110 meal plan. Unused meal swipes do not carry over between semesters. Paladin food points do roll over from semester to semester.

Question: Can all students choose meal plan options in the spring if they attended in the fall? We should not have to pay for meals that are not being used.

Answer: The meal plan options will remain the same for the spring semester. South Housing and Lakeside Housing will be assigned the unlimited plan. North Village will be allowed to choose between a 160 AND 120 meal plan. Unused food points will roll over from semester to semester.

Question: Will students need to submit a negative test before returning in the spring?

Answer: This has not yet been determined, but if national conditions don't change, yes.

Question: Will you be eliminating this anonymous reporting system that has caused so much stress and anxiety in our students?

Answer: Chief Milby and I will address this question shortly.

Question: when do students move out/have to be out for fall 20 semesters?

Answer: Saturday, November 21

Question: and we will be assigned those move-in windows again on the 17 and 18th of January?

Answer: No, students will be allowed to return whenever it's convenient to them.

Question: will kids be able to leave campus on those vacation days in the spring?

Answer: Students are not prohibited from leaving campus. We encourage them to limit their contacts off-campus and engage in masking etc., but they are not prohibited from leaving campus.

Question: I understand that the anonymous system is something that you have always had, but I do think it is being abused this semester. Students are living in fear of being reported and then having consequences

Answer: I appreciate your concerns about anonymous reporting, and will continue to monitor moving forward. Please call or email me if you would like to discuss further.