

Furman Virtual Town Hall for Employees, Jan.14

Transcript of live Q&A chat

How are staff members who are unable to work remotely being equitably supported during the plans that Furman is implementing?

We continue to work with managers and supervisors to ensure that staff are being treated fairly as we understand that some employees that may need to work on campus may be carrying a larger load in some aspects of their positions. HR is happy to hear directly from anyone that is concerned that they are not being supported fairly.

Are you talking just about employees, or about faculty as well?

This would be for everyone, so faculty should work with their Chairs for any accommodations and working remote needs. Open lines of communication with supervisors (for faculty, the department chair) about the potential ways in which remote work could impact their ability to execute their job duties. As was the case in the fall, requests for remote teaching (as opposed to full-on remote work), can be routed through the Dean of Faculty's office. There's no change in approach there.

Will faculty/staff testing be done on-campus?

Yes, testing will be conducted on campus.

Is the COVID testing going to be group testing, or individual testing?

Individual testing.

What is the status of Furman employees receiving the vaccine?

We will try to answer this question during the webinar live, but at this point we expect the earliest availability for higher education faculty and staff to occur in Phase 1B. It is as yet unclear what that actually means regarding when those vaccines will be available locally.

I am a remote employee, but need to come on campus occasionally to do work. Do I need a test?"

Yes

Can we please clarify: employees only, or employees and faculty?

Staff and faculty = all employees

Can we donate sick leave if someone needs it?

Unfortunately, at this time individuals are not able to donate leave time

Faculty teaching online only are considered "remote" or can be tested because we may access our office or other campus resources.

If you are working on campus for any reason, then you will need to be tested. The distinction here is between full-on remote work and online teaching.

What if someone at Furman does not want to be tested? I ask because getting tested will put the person being tested in a situation that they would not normally be put in which could potentially put them at more risk for getting the virus.

The employee testing is carried out in a drive through format on-campus to limit any exposures as much as possible. A number of our ACS peer schools have been testing all employees for some time, and they report no health or other problems related to employee tests.

As an online instructor I still have access to campus, correct? So i will be tested, correct?

Yes, if you are working on campus for any reason, you will be tested.

If someone tests positive but is asymptomatic do they have to use their leave time or will they be able to work remotely while in quarantine?

If their position allows them to perform work remotely (and their manager approves) then they are able to do this during their quarantine.

What about print needs from P2X?

We are still operating and will take care of all your print needs. Just give us a call. Thanks.

If you are to be on campus prior to the COVID testing, what is the protocol?

Essential employees, faculty and staff may continue to access their offices and work areas as needed, following all recommended health protocols.

Do we have any info about vaccination for us as part of the educational community?

We will try to get to this later in the webinar, at this point we expect to be Phase 1B as indicated by SC DHEC, but do not yet have an understanding of when vaccines will actually become available.

Will academic buildings i.e., Riley, Plyler, etc. be open next week?

Academic buildings will not be open to students next week. Faculty and staff can access these buildings.

The information we got last week was that employee families could use the campus to walk/exercise.

This is just for next week. We need to get through the first week. The goal is to open that back up to employee families as long as our testing results support that decision. Thanks for your understanding. That is true prior to return of students to campus, but as students are returning this weekend we will restrict that access for the coming week.

How will Furman support the mental health in regards to faculty and staff?

Sharen will address this in just a moment during the webinar.

When do we anticipate faculty/staff will have access to the vaccine - will Furman help coordinate this?

This will be answered shortly during the webinar.

I have noticed when watching men's basketball games on ESPN plus that there are members of the community present who are not family members or part of the teams. My understanding is they are members of the Roundball Club that contributes to men's basketball. Are there plans to now restrict their attendance at games given the conditions and how will that be communicated? There also seems to be a perception out there that we may be allowing people to attend spring sports games. How is that being communicated to ticket holders?

There are some members of the community present at the games, and we allowed this when the COVID numbers weren't as high. Because we have been able to run the basketball events with a max of 250 attendance (not Roundball, but a few donors here and there, along with family members of coaches and players) with no issues, we will continue to run the games at this level unless we move to Red. Attendance to our other sports is currently under review and we should know how we will proceed within the next week or two.

You mentioned that tests will be administered to employees on Jan 21 and 28. Does this mean we are each tested twice, or just that there are two options before a return to campus is OK'd.

Employees will be tested twice.

With the escalated operational phase, will there be further restrictions to accessing campus from the main gate? Specifically, as it relates to limiting uninvited guests/visitors during this time.

The gate schedule will be the same as it was in the fall. All gates open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to facilitate university operations. If you suspect there are unauthorized visitors on campus please call us at 2111 or use the LiveSafe app to report.

Frequent listener. First time tester. Does the test capture current infection only or would it also be able to identify antibodies if an employee was previously infected and asymptomatic?

The test only indicates active infection, does not indicate if antibodies are present from a prior exposure.

Do we need to use the LiveSafe app if working from home?

All employees should be conducting the daily health screenings on Live Safe but it is not mandatory if working remotely.

For employee testing, how quickly will testing results be returned to individuals?

We anticipate 24-48 hours