

Furman Virtual Town Hall for Returning Students and Families, Jan.12

Transcript of live Q&A chat

Question: If a student is returning on Sunday are they required to be there before 5 p.m. if they have sent in their negative COVID test result?

Yes, they should make every effort to arrive by 5PM, as the university's resources to manage students' arrival will not be available throughout the evening.

Question: What is the current plan for graduation?

There will be two Commencement Exercises, one for the Class of 2021, on May 8, and a second ceremony for the Class of 2020, on the following Saturday, May 15. The Commencement Committee is working to plan events for both graduating classes and will publish information throughout the semester. We look forward to celebrating our graduates.

Question: How many students are remote this semester and how many remote last semester?

We had around 300 remote students in the fall and 130 for the Spring.

Question: What are the criteria by which the week of lockdown will be lifted?

The period of high restrictions, or "low-to-no contact" time will be in place while we assess the disease activity on campus after students arrive. The university will continually assess the disease level both on campus as well as in the community and make decisions based on the data from those disease indicators. Restrictions will be loosened when disease activity indicators suggest it is safe to do so without jeopardizing the safety of the campus community.

Question: How do you hope to keep the 21 and up age group on campus?

All students are strongly discouraged from going off campus during this period. Students who must work off-campus jobs or seek medical care off campus are encouraged to follow Furman's travel policy and guidelines. Enforcement guidelines can be found here: <https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/paladin-promise/paladin-promise-enforcement/>.

Question: ^ not answered live - what is the criteria?

One of our colleagues is answering now. We use the "answer live" feature to take the question out of the queue. Please check the "answered" tab for an answer soon. Thanks.

Question: Back to arrival dates. Our daughter has a time to arrive on Sunday at 9am I think. That would require staying in Greenville on Saturday night. Is it ok to arrive anytime on Sunday?

Yes, she may arrive at any time, Sunday.

Question: Dr. Fauci has said that college students, in the age range (18-24), do not transmit the virus easily and are mostly asymptomatic. Have you considered keeping the students on campus (with fewer restrictions) and offering them plenty of social events and activities while keeping the professors and older population off campus? The professors and staff can teach virtually as they are already doing. Are you offering a reduced fee to attend this semester since the students are not getting the full product?

Based upon feedback from students, we have revised our enforcement policies. More information can be found here: <https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/paladin-promise/paladin-promise-enforcement/>. All our offices remain open to plan programs on campus, and we have created resources to help our student organizations more easily navigate health measures in order to hold activities. While the campus environment is different this term, as it was in the fall, our goal remains to deliver the Furman educational mission. Tuition and fees are not being reduced for Spring.

Question: I know people from the community like to come and walk onto campus. As students, should we report via LiveSafe if people are coming in the back gate by the apartments? There was a large amount of people coming onto campus during the fall semester.

Students are encouraged to use LiveSafe to report unauthorized visitors to campus. An officer is dispatched to investigate all such reports.

Question: Will the Dining Hall have additional dining options available this semester to help keep students on campus?

Our dining options for the spring semester will be the same as when we ended the fall semester. As the weather allows, we will be offering special food events throughout the semester. Look for the announcements for when these begin.

Question: Would you please clarify the 'pods'... must it be individuals in the same building/dorm, wing or floor... or can it be a pod of students in SOHO?

A "pod" is largely defined by where a student lives, In North Village or the Clarke Murphy Complex, this would be roommates for example. For those in singles or doubles, they may select others (up to 4) from the same hall with which they can socialize both indoors and outdoors including eating etc., In the first week we are limiting pods and visitation to the same wing or hall to prevent transmission across housing areas.

Question: What professional development has been given to the professors to ensure a smoother transition for online teaching? Online learning is different than in-person learning.

Our faculty have now had extensive training and experience with different teaching modalities. That training has continued, and will continue throughout the spring semester.

Question: What criteria will determine if it is extended? What level of disease will make extend this period?

There is not one measure that will determine this. Clinicians and public health experts are working with the university to assess numerous measures that collectively are used to make these decisions. Such indicators include but are not limited to county-level disease incidence, community disease trends, the number of students who test positive after arrival on campus, and student compliance with the university guidelines.

Question: Covid testing results in our area are taking some time to be returned. What should we do if test results are not available by Sunday? My student tested on the 12th.

If possible to delay your return until you have the test results, please consider doing so. But if this is problematic, email furman.focused@furman.edu for a personalized plan of action.

Question: If the student has a single can they isolate in their room?

If their room has a private bathroom not shared by another person, they probably can; however it is relative to where exactly they live, and who else may live around them.

Question: My daughter is a sophomore living in a single room in a freshman dorm. Her friends live in in Soho and the Vinings. Can she be a part of one of those pods while still sleeping/studying in her room? She tested positive on 12/1.

Pods must be in the same floor/wing of the residence.

Question: Our daughter is considering doing all remote due to concerns about returning to school. Would we need to contact housing department to set up a time to come get her items?

Yes, if she decides to flip to remote, you may want to review this list of FAQs <https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-communications/01-11-21-delayed-faq/> and then submit your decision to HousingandResidenceLife@furman.edu.

Question: If students are returning late, will they be receiving a second test the week after they return like the students who are returning on time?

If they are not on campus for the date of the universal testing, they will still be included in the regular surveillance screening testing, and they may request to self-select to be part of that weekly sample.

Question: Does Furman anticipate having access to the vaccine at any time this semester for students?

At this time, we are of course hopeful, but unfortunately this depends on so many factors that are beyond our control, including the rate at which SC is able to obtain vaccine, access to new vaccine providers, and the efficiency of vaccinations statewide over time. I don't anticipate this will happen in the near future, but we continue to plan aggressively on campus once those vaccines are made available within the state. We expect to learn more in coming weeks, but unable to give a reliable estimate at this time.

Question: Based on the restrictions that have been shared for arrival, it sounds like we're starting in Red zone -- all classes online, 4-person pods, grab and go dining, etc. Am I reading that wrong?

The red zone is even more restrictive; in this case students may be essentially in self quarantine, and unable to interact in 4-person Pods socially - and for that reason this is envisioned as a short-term, emergency response (certainly not a condition we have experienced to date). Under the Orange phase, students may be virtual this first week, but we anticipate being able to allow students return to in person classes assuming campus numbers in the first week are low, They may also leave their residences, engage in activities (both recreational and academic) with their colleagues within their Pods

Question: will students be allowed to leave campus to go to grocery store and get food from restaurants?

During the low to no contact period at the beginning of the semester all students are strongly discouraged from leaving campus. After this period is lifted, students are encouraged to follow our travel guidelines whenever leaving campus. They may go to the grocery and get food from restaurants under these guidelines. Guidelines can be found here:
<https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-life-activities/transportation-logistics/>

Question: Are teachers eligible for the vaccine in the state of SC, and once all the teachers have been vaccinated, do you plan to loosen the restrictions for students (especially those over 21) in order to encourage them to stay on campus?

Teachers (broadly defined) in SC are considered in Phase 1B. At this point it is unclear when those vaccinations will be available, as this is a very large group extending to seniors, those working in the public sector, etc. The factors that weigh most heavily in the phase assignment are disease prevalence on campus, and if the conditions on campus are as favorable as they

were in the Fall and the community surge subsides, it is certainly our goal and expectation to move to the yellow and/or purple phases to increase opportunities both on - and off - campus,

Question: What is the protocol for students to return who decide to stay at home and attend remotely until in-person classes resume?

An answer to this question and others around this topic can be found here:

<https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-communications/01-11-21-delayed-faq/>

Question: When the students fly in from the west coast and need to shop for a few items, are they going to be able to leave campus to go to the store to stock up between 16-18th?

During the low to no contact period at the beginning of the semester all students are strongly discouraged from leaving campus. P2X, our mail room, remains open for shipment. If a student MUST leave campus, the Walmart Grocery by campus allows for online ordering and contactless pickup as one example.

Question: Are there any considerations to reduce restrictions for students who have already had Covid?

While it is rare for individuals to get re-infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, especially within 3 months of infection, it is possible. Public health guidelines suggest that individuals continue to participate in preventive measures, both after having had COVID-19 as well as after having been vaccinated, as it is unknown whether they might still be able to transmit virus to others. It is also important that we all participate in the recommended behaviors for the sake of consistency and to support social norms regarding health-promoting behaviors. One thing that is different for students who have had COVID-19 within the past three months is that they will not be included in the required asymptomatic testing that occurs during the semester. This is also based on public health recommendations.

Question: What exactly does students are "strongly discouraged" from leaving campus during the low/no contact period mean? Are they allowed to leave, or will they be subject to discipline if they leave campus during the low to no contact period if someone reports that a student left campus?

We are not prohibiting students from leaving campus. We realize that students may leave to get groceries, for example. However, especially during low to no contact, would ask students to avoid eating in restaurants, going to bars, etc. Students who must travel off campus should follow our travel policies which can be found here: <https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-life-activities/transportation-logistics/>. Prohibited off-campus activities would be high-risk activities. To help clarify enforcement, we have added "off campus conduct" to our supplemental student conduct code, which can be found here: <https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/paladin-promise/paladin-promise-enforcement/>.

Question: How are you handling check in for students returning to campus this weekend? How will you ensure that students have received a negative test result before moving back in?

This question has been answered live.

Question: Students who travel to campus at the end of the low contact phase are not being required to isolate once arriving to campus. Please explain.

The reason for the low-to-no contact is because of the mass return of students to campus at one time. This will allow us to conduct the surveillance testing for students and employees and understand our campus infection rates. Students returning a week later after a delay will be coming back in much smaller numbers. They still must provide a recent negative test result and will also be tested a couple days later on campus. Of course, these students must adhere to whatever restrictions may still be in place at the time of their arrival.

Question: the initial email required a negative test taken between the 10th and the 19th. Will be be ok with a test that was taken on the 11th?

Yes

Question: How will students attend remote classes such as Art: Ceramics?

All professors are prepared to engage students through remote instruction, even hands-on classes like ceramics. Our faculty are well-versed in making modifications to their traditional pedagogies. If you would like specific information about a specific course, please feel free to email me for more information, jeremy.cass@furman.edu, and I can gather specifics for you.

Question: Where can a recording of this Town Hall be viewed after this call ends?

The recording will be posted on the Furman Focused website.

Question: Based on the questionnaire students had to fill out earlier, what % of "on campus" students do NOT have an off campus place to quarantine?

Unfortunately, we don't have that number handy right now. We do have that number though. Please email furman.focused@furman.edu and we will provide that answer in the next day or so. Sorry about that.

Question: If a student becomes eligible for a vaccine in their home state, may they leave campus to get vaccinated and then return?

We are not restricting student travel home to get vaccinated. Students will need to continue to comply with all public health guidelines after vaccination, including distancing and wearing of face coverings after vaccinations, as indicated by public health guidelines, until otherwise notified by the university.

Question: Will the PAC reopen after the first week, if still in the orange phase?

Reopening the PAC Fitness Center will depend on the results of the first week of testing. We intend to reopen the Fitness Center as soon as campus disease activity suggests it is safe to do so.

Question: what about parents coming in to watch our their athlete play volleyball? first home game is Jan 31 and Feb 1.

We are currently working through the attendance plan for all of our spring competition. Our main focus is to get approval for parents to attend. At this point, no students will not be able to attend. We should have answers by next week.

Question: How long do you anticipate students having to have remote internships?

We will monitor disease levels in the community and on-campus. For off-campus experiences, the community levels will need to improve.

Question: Can we have Publix drop off items like we did last semester, when student did not have a car?

Yes. Our invited guests policy allows for food delivery such as this, Grubhub, etc. We will clarify groceries on the list of allowed services.

Question: My student 3 lab courses. What happens if the no lab period is extended? I am concerned about completing these classes due to the lab being closed and that my student will not complete her requirements toward her major and may not graduate on time if the lab is closed for an extended period.

Our instructors have become well trained in how to conduct labs remotely. They have designed quite innovative activities and assignments to still achieve the learning objectives of lab sections of courses. If the no lab period is extended, this will not hinder students' abilities to successfully complete and gain credit for these courses.

Question: if student has to leave campus first week for work do they need to contact anyone

We understand some students will have to leave for required obligations, like employment. When doing so, please encourage them to review the FAQs here:
<https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-communications/01-11-21-spring-faq/>

And the travel guidelines here:

<https://www.furman.edu/furman-focused/campus-life-activities/transportation-logistics/>

Students who must work off-campus jobs are encouraged to follow Furman's travel policy and guidelines as Clay shared above. Students who work off campus may request more frequent COVID testing by emailing Furman Focused.

Question: If books have already been purchased and waiting in the bookstore, and now now the student elects to delay return, what would you recommend?

I would encourage students to reach out to their instructors to let them know of this complication. We have let instructors know that students may have limited or no access to course texts during this first week. They should be able to provide alternatives to allow students to maintain progress in the course during this time. If a student has any concerns with a specific course on this issue, please have them email academic.deans@furman.edu

Question: Will more vegan options be offered this semester than fall?

We have a vegan station in the Dining Hall at all meal times. Come see us and we will talk about how we can provide other options for you. We have a dedicated vegan chef. She would be glad to discuss this with you. Email me at tony.mcguirt@furman.edu and we can set up a time to meet.

Question: When will the library be available for students, and what are the hours of operation?

During the first week the Duke Library will be open between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday for students who live in shared bedrooms to find a quiet space to take remote classes, as not to disrupt their roommate. Students may reserve a study room in Duke at <https://libguides.furman.edu/library/floor-plans>. Students who live in private rooms (e.g. students living in The Vinings, North Village private apartments, or singles in the residence halls) should not use these spaces during the low to no contact period to free space for those living in shared spaced.

Question: What is the last possible date that Housing and Residence Life must be notified in order to get a 100% refund of room and board if my daughter decides not to return to campus?

We have asked students to notify us of their intent to flip to a remote learner before tomorrow, January 14th. Per policy, a student may be eligible for a 100% refund up to the day before classes start:

https://catalog.furman.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=580#Refund_Policy

Question: Has Furman made any efforts to work with the developers of the Get app to increase its stability and reliability. It frequently fails to open on devices.

We're not familiar with the Get App. Could you send more information to me?
neil.jamerson@furman.edu. I'll research and be back in touch.