

December 10, 2020

TO: Faculty and Staff
FROM: President Pfeifer
RE: BLC COVID mitigation plan for second semester
DATE: December 10, 2020

Below is the current mitigation plan for Bethany as we anticipate the opening of our second semester. The plan should be understood in the context of “*at this time.*” The Bethany administration will continue to monitor updates from the governor’s office and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), as well as updates on the spread of the virus in Southern MN and the Upper Midwest as a whole. The Cabinet intends to meet again on Monday, December 21, and Monday, January 4, to update our mitigation plan to ensure alignment with current MDH COVID mitigation levels and re-opening guidance.

In general, the proposed plan for second semester assumes that “at this time,” the College will begin at level 3 (Code Orange) to start the semester. *Such a plan takes into consideration the possibility for greater transmission of COVID-19 following the long Christmas break.* The College will monitor and adjust the level as appropriate based on the transmission situation both on campus and in our community. The goal is that Bethany will be able to remain open for in-person learning for the entire semester.

Return to Campus

- Students, faculty, and staff are strongly encouraged to “lay low” or follow a “self-imposed quarantine” period following the New Year holiday until their return to campus. This is encouraged to minimize the amount of COVID brought back to campus after the long break.
- [MT1]
- Students, faculty, and staff who may have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive should quarantine immediately and be tested for COVID 5-7 days after exposure. Anyone who tests positive should isolate at home before returning to campus for the second semester.
- Do not return to campus until you are clear to do so if you are ill or quarantining.
- Students, faculty, and staff who may have traveled over the Christmas break are strongly encouraged to be tested prior to returning to campus for the beginning of the second semester.
- Social distancing and the wearing of face masks will continue to be required when inside all campus buildings for all students, faculty, and staff. Those presenting to in-person classes or presiding over in-person meetings may elect to wear a face shield in place of a face mask.
- Students are welcome to return to campus and move into their res halls when the campus opens for the second semester at 12 p.m. on Sunday, January 10. New students are not permitted to arrive prior to Sunday unless pre-approved by Residential Life.
- Students groups approved for early arrival include athletic teams, Choraliers, and RA’s. These groups should follow the guidelines established by their coaches, conductors, and supervisors.

Campus Buildings Open

- All buildings will be open for the start of the second semester, following the current guidelines available from MDH. For example,
 - The Dining Center hours will remain consistent with the hours established for the first semester. Seating will remain at three per table.
 - The library will resume customary second semester hours and operate according to current social distancing guidelines.
 - The gymnasiums and fitness centers plan to be open for low personal contact student use per current MDH guidelines and when supervised. Face masks, social distancing, and room capacity limits must be observed.
 - All other campus buildings should be open for their typical hours of operation when students are on campus.
- The Bethany campus remains open for guests such as prospective students and their families while visiting the campus, and for vendors and those contracted to engage in business on the Bethany campus.
- At this time, Bethany will not accept guests on campus for building rentals or for meetings of outside organizations unless prior authorization has been granted by the College administration.

Academics

- The campus will be open for in-person learning in all classrooms under the previously established social distancing guidelines employed in the first semester.
- Via the use of Hy-Flex technology, classes will continue to be live-streamed for those students, due to social distancing, unable to get a seat in class and for those who elect to take courses online.
 - Faculty may encourage students living on campus and in the community to attend class in-person as much as possible.

Chapel

- Following MDH guidelines, daily chapel will continue to be conducted in-person with socially distanced seating, as well as via live-stream technology.
- At this time Trinity Chapel will continue to refrain from the use of hymnals.

Testing

- While testing is required by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in order for athletic teams to participate in interscholastic competition, surveillance testing of the Bethany campus is not required. However, in order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, a campus-wide testing clinic has tentatively been scheduled to be set up at Bethany on **Monday, January 4th**. All students in the area, as well as staff and faculty, are encouraged to participate in this free testing. Watch for additional details in a future announcement.
- For students returning to campus on January 10th, an additional campus-wide testing clinic has tentatively been scheduled to be set up on **Monday, January 11th**. Returning students, as well as faculty and staff who were not tested previously, are encouraged to participate in this free testing. Watch for additional details in a future announcement.

Faculty and Staff

- The Bethany campus should be understood as being open for in-person learning. As such, Bethany employees should plan to work from campus. Per our employee guidelines, those wishing to work from home should consult with their department supervisor, divisional Vice President, and HR before doing so.

Resident Halls

- The Bethany Residence Halls will continue to operate following the mitigation protocols put in place during the first semester.
- Visitation hours in the res halls will resume as normal on January 10, 2021, but be restricted to only allow current Bethany student access. The res halls are closed to all outside guests who are not currently registered BLC students.

Dining Center

- The Dining Center hours will remain consistent with the hours established for the first semester. Seating will remain at three per table.

Campus Cleaning

- The same campus cleaning procedures will remain in place for the second semester as in the first semester. These include the use of disinfecting machines, air flow exchange, and the use of personal disinfecting wipes found in buckets in each classroom and meeting room.

Athletics

- Pending approval by NCAA and the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) of which Bethany is a member, athletic practices and competitions may resume under the guidelines established by the NCAA and UMAC, and in compliance with MDH.

Fine Arts

- Fine Arts rehearsals and performances may resume under the guidelines established by MDH.
- Following MDH guidelines for required social distancing, face coverings, and limited capacity in event spaces for all performances, spectators including campus guests, as well as students, faculty, and staff may attend. This plan is subject to change per updated MDH recommendations.
- As in the past, effort should be made to live-stream / record performances for distribution to our broader constituency when possible.

Student Activities

- Student activities, intramurals, clubs, and organizations may resume as long as they can be conducted with social distancing, face coverings, and maximum occupancy protocols can be observed. This includes Welcome Back Week Activities.

NOTE: This Bethany Lutheran College COVID-19 campus mitigation plan is subject to change at any time per updated guidelines for college campuses available from the MDH. Additional announcements will be made as necessary.