Update to Return to the Hilltop
July 17, 2020

It has been about three weeks from our introduction to our “Return to the Hilltop” plan (RTH). As we stated in the plan as well as in the virtual town hall meetings with students, families, faculty and staff, we will update this plan several times prior to the beginning of classes on August 24. As we approach the fall, we are learning more about testing and tracking the virus. We are also working through the details of day-to-day life on campus - what needs to change and what does not. And of course, the spread of the virus in Jefferson County as well as the State of Alabama will influence decisions we make.

Update on the Pandemic in Our Area

Over the past few weeks, the coronavirus has spread, especially in our home county and state. Some of you have reached out to me about the viability of returning to school in fall. At this point, we have not changed our plans about the fall term. We believe that we have a robust plan that will significantly mitigate the risks of the virus on campus. We are, however, closely monitoring the following statistics for Jefferson County:

- Growth rate: the number of cases per day divided by the number of cases from the prior day.
- Rt: the expected infection rate.
  
  If Rt > 1, each infected person infects more than one person: pandemic is growing
  If Rt < 1, each infected person infects less than one person: pandemic is dissipating
- Positivity rate: the percentage of tests that come back positive each day.
- Hospitalization and ICU capacity: the number and percentage of vacant hospital beds and intensive care unit beds.

We look at seven-day moving averages for daily rates to smooth out data aberrations. We focus not just on the immediate data, but also the trends these data project.
We are in close contact with the Jefferson County Department of Health and will continue to consult with them regarding the status of the pandemic in the county. If we believe that the spread of the virus could not be controlled due to its rapid spread in the county, we would have to make adjustments that could include starting a few weeks later and/or starting online initially and then bringing people to campus. As I mentioned above, we do not believe that we are at this point. We are optimistic that we will not get to the point of needing to change the academic calendar.

The following web pages have detailed COVID-19 information for Jefferson County and Alabama updated daily:

- [Bama Tracker](www.bamatracker.com)
- [Jefferson County Department of Health](www.jcdh.org)
- [Alabama Department of Public Health](www.alabamapublichealth.gov)

**Adjustments to Our Plan**

The plan we presented three weeks ago is based on three pillars:

- Pillar One: Block the virus from campus.
- Pillar Two: Disrupt the virus from spreading on campus.
- Pillar Three: Isolate the virus when detected.

**Pillar One: Block the virus from campus. (page 6 in RTH)**

Pillar One is the focus of bringing everyone back to campus as safely as possible. Most of the protocols in Pillar One will be executed in August as we return. Additional protocols will be added in more detail with respect to the limited visitors we have on campus. In general, the time to focus on blocking the virus from our campus is when people return.

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the following statement:

“Testing of all students, faculty and staff for COVID-19 before allowing campus entry (entry testing) has not been systematically studied. It is unknown if entry testing in IHEs provides any additional reduction in person-to-person transmission of the virus beyond
what would be expected with implementation of other infection preventive measures (e.g., social distancing, cloth face covering, hand washing, enhanced cleaning and disinfection). Therefore, CDC does not recommend entry testing of all returning students, faculty, and staff.”

We completely disagree with this conclusion as do many schools and businesses. It reminds us of the CDC’s initial wrong-headed recommendation against mask wearing. A July 14 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education describes their advice as “inexplicable and irresponsible.”

“The language of the CDC statement makes a disingenuous appeal to an absence of evidence. It is true that we have never had students return to college amidst a COVID-19 pandemic, so we have no direct experience with the effects of testing in that specific scenario. But we know exactly what to expect. We have overwhelming evidence from numerous other settings that testing is effective above and beyond other measures at identifying infected individuals, and that by isolating such individuals we can reduce the spread of disease. The CDC’s rationale for inaction is akin to observing that seatbelts save lives in Cleveland but refusing to recommend them in Cincinnati because that’s a different city and “you never know.” The Chronicle of Higher Education, Carl T. Bergstrom, July 14, 2020

We share this view.

The “base” of Pillar One is the back-to-back testing we will conduct before students can stay on campus. We want to make this as easy as possible for everyone. For the test we are asking you to take prior to coming on campus, we have arranged for two different PCR tests, depending on where you live.

- If you live within commuting distance, we will ask you to go to UAB for a swab PCR test that is being paid for by CARES Act funds through the state of Alabama. Neither you nor your insurance will have to pay for this.
- If you live far enough away from Birmingham so that traveling to UAB is not convenient, we will mail you sample saliva collection kits from CoughDX with instructions on how to use them. You send these tests to specified lab and receive results via text message within 24 hours. However, you will need to bill this to your insurance. If your insurance will not pay, let us know and we have funds to cover it. You must bill insurance first.

You will have no out of pocket expense for either test. Over the coming days, we will send you specific instructions on what to do. In the meantime, you do not have to set up appointments or check with your insurance company.
Ideally, we would like for you to take your test seven to ten days prior to coming to campus. If your result is positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days, including 72 hours from last symptoms and without a fever suppressant (such as Tylenol or Advil). After the isolation, you may come to campus. If your result is negative, you will come to campus at your scheduled time and confirm that you have no symptoms.

Once you are on campus, you will take another test, this time an antigen test. Like a PCR test, it will tell us whether or not you have the virus. It is not as precise as the PCR test, but it will enable us to give you an answer in 15 minutes. If you test positive, we will ask you to go home if possible to isolate for 10 days, including 72 hours from last symptoms and without a fever suppressant, after which you may return to campus.

Do not to come to campus if you are symptomatic. If you become symptomatic right before you arrive, and if you test negative on an antigen test, we will give you a PCR test and quarantine you until we receive results.

If you have tested positive within the last 30 days and you can confirm that you have not been symptomatic for the previous three days (without fever suppressants), you will not need to take either test. If this is the case, please reach out to Student Development (studev@bsc.edu). We will ask you to send a dated copy of your positive test result.

If you have tested positive in the last 30 days and have no symptoms, you are not contagious. We will not test you because in many cases, PCR tests will come back positive in people who previously had COVID-19 due to the remnants of the virus in their body.

The upshot of our testing strategy for students returning to campus is this: anyone who moves into campus housing will have had two tests with negative results within 10 days and will not be symptomatic. We believe that this is critical to starting the fall term with a significantly lower presence of the virus on campus than off campus.

In addition to taking the first PCR test at home, we will send you an app for your phone or computer with which you will track your symptoms every day. We ask that you start using this app the day you take the first test. As well, we ask that you start limiting your exposure to people outside your immediate family after you take your first test and up until you take your second test on campus. It is not realistic to ask you to isolate yourself completely from family and friends right before you go to college, but we encourage you to limit your exposure, avoid large gatherings, wear a mask, wash hands frequently, and observe social distancing so you do not contract the virus between tests.
Symptom Tracking

We have partnered with UAB to release a Health Tracker app to track symptoms throughout the term.

- For students, once you have taken your first test (approximately seven to 10 days before move-in), you will undergo COVID-19 training that will set you up on the app and prepare you for the fall term. The app will then remind you daily to verify that your temperature is normal and that you have no other symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Faculty and staff will begin the symptom tracking process when they arrive for COVID-19 Training Orientation. We ask our BSC community to begin symptom tracking seven to 10 days before we all arrive on campus as a way to build cadence and implement good practices for a strong start.

Additionally, between taking the first test and coming to campus, we will ask you to watch a video that will go into details of our protocols and the science behind them. To come to campus, you will need to:

- Have negative test results for COVID-19.
- Shown no symptoms from the time you took the test to arrival, as validated by your Health Tracker.
- Watched the training videos.

When you arrive on campus, we will ask you to sign the Panther Pledge.

Panther Pledge

Prior to arriving and beginning at BSC, I pledge that I will:

- Decrease my potential risk for bringing COVID-19 to campus by reducing my interactions with others through avoiding large gatherings of people, maintaining social distance and mask-wearing when in public spaces, and avoiding contact with anyone I know to have been recently exposed or diagnosed with the virus.
- Complete the online training regarding the Coronavirus, including how to use the Health Tracker app.
• Download and begin to develop the habitual use of the Health Tracker app that I will be required to complete daily once I arrive on campus.
• Report any symptoms of coronavirus through the Health Tracker app which BSC Health Services will receive, and respond to their contact to me in follow up, as well as seek medical support for COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fever of 100° or more, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new gastrointestinal symptoms, and/or loss of taste or smell).
• Obtain a negative COVID-19 test prior to my arrival at BSC for the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Once I arrive and begin classes at BSC, I pledge that I will:

• Support essential safety measures related to COVID-19, including:
  o monitoring, reporting, and seeking care for any personal virus-related symptoms;
  o practicing social distancing per indicated guidelines;
  o wearing face masks where required or requested;
  o following essential protocols in public, common use spaces, like in the Caf;
  o maintaining clean hands through regular hand washing and/or using hand sanitizer.
• Follow the above-listed virus-related safety measures in my off-campus activities, as a campus resident who engages in work, internship, religious, social, and other personal activities beyond campus as well as someone who goes home periodically, and as a commuter who lives away from campus and engages in the community in numerous ways.
• Complete the Health Tracker app daily.
• Report any symptoms of COVID-19 as listed above through the Health Tracker app or directly to Health Services at BSC, and remain in quarantine and isolation until I receive follow up and final clearance from Health Services at BSC.
• Undergo COVID-19-related testing when notified by BSC that such is needed.
• Maintain awareness of virus-related information provided by BSC.
• Ensure that my immunizations are up to date and obtain a flu shot, absent any documented vaccination concerns.

I acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased my personal responsibility with respect to my personal health and safety, and that of the entire BSC community. I recognize that if I do not adhere to the Panther Pledge, I am putting my peers, friends, faculty, and staff at risk unnecessarily. I understand that if I cannot abide by these expectations, I may be asked to finish the academic term off campus.
To minimize the risks of contracting as well as spreading this highly contagious virus to the other members of the BSC community, and so that I may engage fully in the academic year of 2020-2021, I pledge to follow the rules and guidelines set by the BSC administration, outlined in this Panther Pledge.

Signature: __________________________ Dated: __________________________

Return to Campus Scenarios

Blocking the Virus After Return

Once all students, faculty, and staff have undergone testing and are back on campus, we will break our community into two groups: Medium Exposure, High Exposure.

Medium Exposure

We are assuming that students who live on campus will go off campus periodically. We know that faculty, staff, and commuters leave campus every day. We assume all three members of the campus community will be exposed to people outside the gates. Therefore, everyone will need to be tested periodically. We have not yet settled on a detailed testing regime, but antigen testing
every four weeks is a possibility. It is less likely that insurance will cover these tests; however, you will not have to pay for them.

**High Exposure:**

A student who participates in athletics (to the extent we have training or practices in the fall semester) or visual and performing arts will be considered high exposure. We have not yet settled on this testing regime, but antigen testing every week is a possibility. You will also not have to pay for these tests.

**Athletics**

Since the last presentation of this plan, the presidents of the member colleges of the Southern Athletic Association agreed to suspend all fall conference play. There will be no SAA-sanctioned matches, games, or conference tournament in the fall. The SAA has not yet decided how to approach contests for winter sports that occur during the latter part of the fall semester. It is the intention of the presidents of the SAA to have fall sports play a conference schedule during the spring 2021 term.

It is possible that low-contact sports such as golf, tennis, and cross country could have limited fall competition off-campus with no overnight travel. It is possible that soccer, football, and volleyball will have the equivalent of spring training in the fall. It is possible that sports like basketball and swimming could start late in the fall term. These decisions will depend on how we view the risks of each activity and the overall risk of the spread of virus on campus and in Jefferson County.

By effectively cancelling the fall season, we have a much tighter control over who comes and goes on our campus. We eliminate high-risk activities with students from other colleges. We reinforce Pillar One by making it less likely for the virus to come to campus.

More detailed protocols with respect to guests will come in our next update.

**Second Pillar: Disrupt the virus from spreading**

**Masks – “Cloth Face Coverings”** (page 17 in RTH)

We have a more detailed protocol with respect to face coverings on campus.
Every person on campus will be required to wear a face covering that covers their mouth and nose whenever they are in a public space. This includes faculty, staff, students and visitors.

We recommend that each person have five face coverings because they should be washed after each use. BSC will provide each student with two masks in their COVID-19 Care Kit, and faculty and staff with one mask each. Faculty will also receive one face shield to allow them a choice of face coverings to wear during classes. Cloth face coverings will need to be washed with regular laundry detergent and stored in a paper bag when not in use. Face coverings will be required for walking on campus, sitting in any indoor meetings including classes, and going to the restroom.

The only exceptions for not wearing a face covering are when occupying a room alone (private office, residence hall room, etc.) or when eating a meal.

There has been some speculation about the risks of the virus spreading via aerosols. The experts whom we have spoken do not see aerosols as a primary way for the virus to spread. Click for related article.

We are monitoring this discussion and exploring scientifically substantiated ways to minimize the spread due to aerosols.

**Third Pillar: Isolate the virus when detected**

We have updated protocols for students, faculty, and staff with respect to isolating the virus if infected (page 21 in RTH).

- **Quarantine** separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
- **Isolation** separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Scenarios:

- If you have been in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, you must quarantine in your respective homes/residence hall rooms/apartments for five days and then be tested at our on-campus clinic.
- **If your test is negative and you have not been symptomatic** for any of the five days, then you can return to regular scheduling.
- **If your test is negative and you are symptomatic**, you should wait for 72 hours after your last symptoms before returning to regular scheduling.
• If your test is positive and you have not been symptomatic for any of the five days, then you must isolate for 10 days after testing positive. After 10 days, in case you develop symptoms, you should wait for 72 hours after your last symptoms before returning to regular scheduling.

• If your test is positive and you are symptomatic, you must isolate for at least 10 days after testing AND 72 hours have passed since last symptoms.

We have set aside approximately 30 rooms for isolation, all in the Hillside Apartments. We are training staff members on contact tracing. We will be working with our healthcare provider, Medical Care, to help us monitor and care for students who need to be isolated.

Contract Tracing (page 22 in RTH)

We will be training staff on campus (not students) to work with the Jefferson County Department of Health on contact tracing. We will also offer a UAB-sponsored contact tracing technology for our students, faculty, and staff which they can opt in voluntarily. This will allow the Alabama Department of Health to notify them anonymously through Bluetooth technology if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. We strongly encourage all faculty, staff, and students to opt into this contract tracing app. We will provide more details on this technology in our next update.

Going Forward

Communications (page 26 in RTH)

Throughout the semester, we will structure a COVID-19 Task Force to monitor the situation on the Hilltop and in our BSC community. Members of the task force will include the chairs of our working groups, a representative from Jefferson County Department of Health, a representative from Medical Care, one medical expert, the Director of Health Services, and the Chief of Staff. The COVID-19 Task Force will meet weekly to examine new cases and implement strategies to mitigate risk and extinguish the threat.

Flu Vaccines (page 26 in RTH)

In order to protect our campus and separate COVID-19 cases from flu cases, every student, faculty, and staff member will be required to get an influenza vaccination. This vaccine will be available on campus early in the semester and will be administered by Cahaba Medical Care. You will need a medical reason to opt out.

Insurance Coverage (page 26 in RTH)
I want to reiterate that you will not have to pay for testing. All indications are that insurance will cover the costs of the first two tests for returning to campus. We will give you instructions on how to bill your insurance company. If you do not have insurance or your insurance company turns you down, let us know and we will seek out other funds. You will not have to pay for initial testing to return to campus.

Throughout the fall term, insurance companies will pay for any tests for symptomatic individuals as well as those who are not symptomatic but have been exposed to the virus. It is not clear if insurance will pay for the additional tests of non-exposed, non-symptomatic people that will administered throughout the fall term. We will monitor the status between insurance companies and COVID-19 tests carefully, so that our students and employees will not have to pay for these necessary tests. Additionally, we are looking into other funds available for tests.

**Final Comments**

We hope the adjustments to our plan have clarified some issues, in particular some of the details about testing upon returning to the Hilltop. There are many more details to work out over the coming weeks. By the beginning of August, we will have another update with details for the return and more details about the rest of the fall term.

Over the next few weeks, we will put together our COVID-19 Task Force. This group will focus on monitoring the spread of the virus in Jefferson County, apply new science as it becomes available, and update the plan when necessary. They will be committed to mitigating risk of the virus and enhancing the safety of our BSC community.

By August 1, we will have a BSC COVID-19 web page that will enable us to make public updates on the plan. It will also make this plan more accessible to you.

We are exploring a larger offering of online classes which will give those who need accommodation a larger choice as well as decrease the density of people on campus at any one time. We will address this potential change to our offering prior to our August update.

Our Return to the Hilltop plan remains a work in progress as we learn more about COVID-19 and our changing environment. Thank you for your patience as we navigate through this together. We empathize with our students, faculty, and staff during these unprecedented times. Please email us questions or concerns to covid19questions@bsc.edu. We encourage your input as we finalize out protocols. Thank you for your support, and please take care.

Daniel B. Coleman, President
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was 1918 when Southern University and Birmingham College merged. It was also the year of the influenza of 1918, one of the most devastating pandemics of the 20th Century. The newly formed college survived. Now, 102 years later, we are faced with another pandemic – one that threatens our health, disrupts our lives, and makes us wonder if the world will ever be “normal” again.

As a country and as a college, we survived other pandemics. In the 20th Century alone, we survived polio, tuberculosis, and numerous virulent viruses, including the H2N2 of 1957, and the H3N2 Virus of 1968. Through the development of vaccines, we tamed the measles and the mumps, and we eradicated polio. Though there is still no cure for HIV, this once-deadly virus became a chronic, treatable condition. For the last 100 years, we have been dealing with highly contagious diseases and, for the most part, adjusting day-to-day lives until they were eventually contained or neutralized.

We find ourselves today in a situation that our parents and grandparents would recognize: we are battling a highly contagious, dangerous virus for which we have no vaccine. Our best form of defense is adapting our behavior. What makes today different than previous pandemics is the speed at which science can understand and address the threat. It seems that every few weeks, we have more tools for testing and treating. We constantly learn more about infections and how best to avoid them. We hear encouraging reports about the creation of an effective vaccine.

As we think about returning to the Hilltop for fall 2020, we think about our parents and grandparents and what they endured. We recognize that science will likely bring us close to managing COVID-19 in a matter of months, not years. We know that through testing, quarantining, tracing, and isolating, we can limit exposure. We know that through preventive measures such as social distancing, mask wearing, and handwashing, we can minimize the spread of the virus itself. We have a much better understanding of the risks we face and how to minimize them than we did in March when we closed our campus.

A Birmingham-Southern education is relationship-based. Our faculty personalize the delivery of knowledge for every student, and foster the testing of that knowledge through discussion, debate, and performance. Despite the incredible efforts of faculty and students in the spring, it is hard to replicate this experience online. We believe that it is important to bring students and faculty back to campus in the fall.
This document outlines our approach to the risk of contagion and how we plan to minimize this risk for our students, faculty, and staff. These efforts are meant to address the risks of bringing people together on a college campus. While these measures do not eliminate all of the risks posed by COVID-19, taken together, these measures significantly reduce the risk of an outbreak in the BSC community. This document will be continuously reviewed and updated. We appreciate any feedback.

Sincerely,

Daniel B. Coleman

President
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is our primary responsibility. Notwithstanding, a safe environment is not entirely risk-free. Our job is to reduce the risk of contagion. Through many incremental steps, our goal is to create an environment that is not made riskier despite gathering people together on one campus to learn from each other. While a Birmingham-Southern College education includes engagement with the community around us, we must learn to adjust those interactions to ensure the safety of everybody.

We are guided by science. We are monitoring all developments related to preventing, testing, isolating, and treating the virus in real time. We will continuously review all new developments and adjust our plans accordingly as information about the virus changes and new guidance emerges.

We are guided by experts and the law. We are closely monitoring the number of cases in the Birmingham and Jefferson County communities, which may require adjustments to our plans if these cases rise significantly. We will work closely with the Jefferson County Department of Public Health as well as the Alabama Department of Public Health to closely monitor and track any new cases on campus. We must also ensure that we are compliant with any changes to national/state/local laws and regulations which also may require us to adjust our plans accordingly.

We are guided by history. We know that in the last six decades, our society has endured similar highly contagious diseases and navigated through them. We are confident that we can fulfill our mission to educate young people while keeping our community safe.

We are guided by the attributes of BSC. We are a small college with a closed campus. About 80 percent of our students live within our gates. In fall 2020, more than 90 percent of these students can sleep in single rooms in campus housing. We will cap class sizes at 30 per class, with an average class size of 15. We will seat students at least six feet apart in every class. Our students, faculty, and staff comprise about 1500 people in total, a number that will make their screening, testing, and tracing more easily manageable than at larger institutions.
In order to draft and execute a successful Return to the Hilltop plan, we have created six working groups to incorporate the perspectives of every aspect of the Birmingham-Southern community. The working groups are: Health Guidelines, Student Life, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Athletics, and Finance and Operations. Each working group is tasked with creating new processes and protocols to mitigate risk in their focused field as well as for the greater BSC community.

Additionally, we regularly consult with seven medical experts around the country – five of whom are BSC graduates – about our “Return to the Hilltop” plan. Their expertise includes but is not limited to epidemiology, oncology, clinical pathology, infectious diseases, public health, and primary care services. We are thankful for their expertise and resources.

Locally, we are regularly in contact with the Jefferson County Department of Public Health and the Alabama Department of Public Health, receiving coronavirus updates in real-time to guide our decisions. As well, we have taken counsel from our Board of Trustees with scenario planning for the return.

We would like to thank American Family Care, Medical Care, and the UAB Schools of Medicine and Public Health for their significant input. In addition to sharing their protocols on returning to campus, UAB is also providing us with the technology to track symptoms as well as notify us if we have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. We are grateful for their partnership.
Our plan is based on three fundamental pillars with one objective: To create a hostile environment for the transmission of COVID-19.

**BLOCK: Mitigate risk of virus from getting onto campus.**

*Day 1*

It is important that our BSC community starts off the term COVID-19 free and well-educated about the coronavirus and our protocols. Therefore, prior to coming to campus, we will require every student, staff, and faculty to complete web-based training on the virus and the science that has led us to our protocols. Upon arrival, we will require everyone to demonstrate that they are COVID-19 -free by producing negative results from a PCR test taken within the two weeks prior to return. We will then test everyone again once they come to campus. Everyone will be required to download two apps for their smartphone: 1) Health Tracker: to help track their symptoms and 2) Exposure Notification: to trace their contacts in the event one becomes contagious.

**DISRUPT: Mitigate risk of virus spreading on campus.**

*Throughout the fall term*

Once on campus, everyone must commit to actions that minimize the spread of the virus through the air, which means wearing cloth masks and ensuring social distance. In addition, everyone
must commit to actions that minimize the spread of the virus through surfaces, which means cleaning (done by individuals and the College), hand-washing, and not touching one’s face.

**ISOLATE: If detected, we isolate to stop the spread of the virus.**

*Throughout the fall term*

In case the virus does make it to campus, it is urgent for us to detect it as soon as possible. This means that everyone will need to confirm via an app that they do not have symptoms. Otherwise, they will need to be tested. This means that we will have to test people we categorize as high-exposure risk (for example, athletes and members of choral groups). If someone tests positive, we will have to trace their contacts via the app on their phone. We will have to isolate that individual for 14 days, at least 10 days after symptoms start, and until they have had 72 hours of no fever without fever-suppressants.

**Accommodations**

If anyone in the Birmingham-Southern community falls into a high-risk category due to age and/or health conditions, we will work with them to accommodate their needs. Please let BSC Human Resources (faculty and staff) or Student Development (students) know if you fall into this category, and we will see how we can help you participate remotely, but actively, in academic and campus life.

**GOING FORWARD**

Continuing to consult outside experts, public health officials, and the BSC working groups, the College’s senior leadership team will monitor all developments with respect to the scientific understanding of the virus. Such developments could alter our efforts to minimize infections, and behavioral recommendations could change. We expect that developments in testing and treatment will make managing this virus easier, and we hope a vaccine will be available to our community in 2021. We will also monitor the ebb and flow of the outbreak in Jefferson County and the state of Alabama. Working with Medical Care, we will share data with the state and local public health departments; we will assess the implications of the infection rate among the greater community on Birmingham-Southern College.

We will continue to fill in the details of our plan between now and August.

We are currently working with all of our partners who provide internships to develop an agreement on protocols to protect our students during this pandemic.

We are working on guidelines for students who work off campus to request of their employers to ensure that these environments meet our health and safety standards.
We will continue to share information with other members of the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS) as well as other colleges and universities in the Birmingham area to continuously improve our safety measures.

It is our goal and expectation that we will provide a great and safe BSC experience within the constraints needed to limit the spread of this virus. We anticipate keeping students on campus until Thanksgiving. It may not be the fall term that everyone envisioned, but it will be a fall term that we will all learn from and never forget.

THE PILLARS

PILLAR 1: BLOCK VIRUS FROM CAMPUS

RETURN TO CAMPUS

Pillar One is the focus of bringing everyone back to campus as safely as possible. Most of the protocols in Pillar One will be executed in August as we return. Additional protocols will be added in more detail with respect to the limited visitors we have on campus. In general, the time to focus on blocking the virus from our campus is when people return.

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the following statement:

“Testing of all students, faculty and staff for COVID-19 before allowing campus entry (entry testing) has not been systematically studied. It is unknown if entry testing in IHEs provides any additional reduction in person-to-person transmission of the virus beyond what would be expected with implementation of other infection preventive measures (e.g., social distancing, cloth face covering, hand washing, enhanced cleaning and disinfection). Therefore, CDC does not recommend entry testing of all returning students, faculty, and staff.”

We completely disagree with this conclusion as do many schools and businesses. It reminds us of the CDC’s initial wrong-headed recommendation against mask wearing. A July 14 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education describes their advice as “inexplicable and irresponsible.”
“The language of the CDC statement makes a disingenuous appeal to an absence of evidence. It is true that we have never had students return to college amidst a COVID-19 pandemic, so we have no direct experience with the effects of testing in that specific scenario. But we know exactly what to expect. We have overwhelming evidence from numerous other settings that testing is effective above and beyond other measures at identifying infected individuals, and that by isolating such individuals we can reduce the spread of disease. The CDC’s rationale for inaction is akin to observing that seatbelts save lives in Cleveland but refusing to recommend them in Cincinnati because that’s a different city and “you never know.” The Chronicle of Higher Education, Carl T. Bergstrom, July 14, 2020

We share this view.

The “base” of Pillar One is the back-to-back testing we will conduct before students can stay on campus. We want to make this as easy as possible for everyone. For the test we are asking you to take prior to coming on campus, we have arranged for two different PCR tests, depending on where you live.

- If you live within commuting distance, we will ask you to go to UAB for a swab PCR test that is being paid for by CARES Act funds through the state of Alabama. Neither you nor your insurance will have to pay for this.
- If you live far enough away from Birmingham so that traveling to UAB is not convenient, we will mail you sample saliva collection kits from CoughDX with instructions on how to use them. You send these tests to specified lab and receive results via text message within 24 hours. However, you will need to bill this to your insurance. If your insurance will not pay, let us know and we have funds to cover it. You must bill insurance first.

You will have no out of pocket expense for either test. Over the coming days, we will send you specific instructions on what to do. In the meantime, you do not have to set up appointments or check with your insurance company.

Ideally, we would like for you to take your test seven to ten days prior to coming to campus. If your result is positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days, including 72 hours from last symptoms and without a fever suppressant (such as Tylenol or Advil). After the isolation, you may come to campus. If your result is negative, you will come to campus at your scheduled time and confirm that you have no symptoms.

Once you are on campus, you will take another test, this time an antigen test. Like a PCR test, it will tell us whether or not you have the virus. It is not as precise as the PCR test, but it will enable us to give you an answer in 15 minutes. If you test positive, we will ask you to go home if
possible to isolate for 10 days, including 72 hours from last symptoms and without a fever suppressant, after which you may return to campus.

Do not come to campus if you are symptomatic. If you become symptomatic right before you arrive, and if you test negative on an antigen test, we will give you a PCR test and quarantine you until we receive results.

If you have tested positive within the last 30 days and you can confirm that you have not been symptomatic for the previous three days (without fever suppressants), you will not need to take either test. If this is the case, please reach out to Student Development (studev@bsc.edu). We will ask you to send a dated copy of your positive test result. If you have tested positive in the last 30 days and have no symptoms, you are not contagious. We will not test you because in many cases, PCR tests will come back positive in people who previously had COVID-19 due to the remnants of the virus in their body.

The upshot of our testing strategy for students returning to campus is this: anyone who moves into campus housing will have had two tests with negative results within 10 days and will not be symptomatic. We believe that this is critical to starting the fall term with a significantly lower presence of the virus on campus than off campus.

In addition to taking the first PCR test at home, we will send you an app for your phone or computer with which you will track your symptoms every day. We ask that you start using this app the day you take the first test. As well, we ask that you start limiting your exposure to people outside your immediate family after you take your first test and up until you take your second test on campus. It is not realistic to ask you to isolate yourself completely from family and friends right before you go to college, but we encourage you to limit your exposure, avoid large gatherings, wear a mask, wash hands frequently, and observe social distancing so you do not contract the virus between tests.

**Symptom Tracking**
We have partnered with UAB to release a Health Tracker app to track symptoms throughout the term.
• For students, once you have taken your first test (approximately seven to 10 days before move-in), you will undergo COVID-19 training that will set you up on the app and prepare you for the fall term. The app will then remind you daily to verify that your temperature is normal and that you have no other symptoms associated with COVID-19.

• Faculty and staff will begin the symptom tracking process when they arrive for COVID-19 Training Orientation. We ask our BSC community to begin symptom tracking seven to 10 days before we all arrive on campus as a way to build cadence and implement good practices for a strong start.

Additionally, between taking the first test and coming to campus, we will ask you to watch a video that will go into details of our protocols and the science behind them. To come to campus, you will need to:

  o Have negative test results for COVID-19.
  o Shown no symptoms from the time you took the test to arrival, as validated by your Health Tracker.
  o Watched the training videos.

When you arrive on campus, we will ask you to sign the **Panther Pledge (See Appendix 1)**.

**Return to Campus Scenario Chart:**
SCHEDULING THE RETURN

STAFF

Staff is currently working on campus on an as-needed basis; otherwise, they are working remotely. This work arrangement will continue through the end of July. As of August 1, we expect staff who do not need an accommodation to be prepared to come back to campus to work. If you need to request an accommodation due to being at higher risk for COVID-19, please refer to the Accommodations Section of this plan for additional information.

Notwithstanding, we will look to stagger the timing of the workday and possibly request that some staff continue to work at home on certain days. Your immediate supervisor and vice president will work with you in establishing a revised work schedule, if needed. We will also seek alternative workspace and/or a sufficient barrier to provide the required social distancing space. When possible, staff should utilize virtual options rather than in person meetings. We will work to maximize the effectiveness of our staff while limiting the number of people on campus at any one time. Considerations for the campus community as a whole will determine scheduling changes.

FACULTY

Currently, faculty are coming to campus if they need to do so. All summer classes are being taught online. Faculty who do not need an accommodation will be expected to return to campus just before the start of classes on August 24. If you need to request an accommodation due to being at higher risk for COVID-19, please refer to the Accommodations Section of this plan for additional information.

Customary opening-of-school meetings involving faculty will be held remotely. As with staff, we want our faculty to be as effective as possible. While not teaching or meeting with students, we encourage faculty to continue to work remotely.

STUDENTS

Move-in for new and returning students will follow a staged and staggered schedule, with dates for early drop-off of belongings in the weeks prior to actual move-in. Each stage will include temperature and symptom checks for students and family members assisting them. Specific details and sign-up will be communicated directly to students via their BSC email addresses and will also be posted on the BSC web site.
Anticipated Arrival Dates, Times, and Populations

July 30: Community Coordinators move-in
July 31 – August 2: First-years drop off items to rooms
August 6: Resident Assistants move-in to halls
August 7 – 9: Returning and transfer students drop off
August 14: Orientation Leaders move-in to the halls
August 14 – 16: Returning and transfer students drop off
August 19 & 20: First-years: remaining residents move-in; 160 residents check-in (those who dropped off earlier); 50 commuters check in/transfers: remaining residents move in
August 20: Orientation begins that afternoon/evening
August 21: Returning commuter students check-in
August 22 & 23: Returning student residents move-in or check-in
August 24: Classes begin

MINIMIZE EXPOSURE FROM OFF CAMPUS

MODIFIED ACADEMIC CALENDAR

We anticipate everyone returning to campus on Monday, August 24, for 13 weeks of classes. We will have class on Labor Day and will not have a fall break. The last day of class will be Friday, November 20. Monday and Tuesday, November 23 and 24, will be reading days. If there are final presentations for a class project, these presentations will take place during these two days. Campus will close on Wednesday, November 25, and students will not return to campus after Thanksgiving. Students will take finals online and submit final papers online during the week after Thanksgiving. However, as during regular terms, some professors may choose to have final exams/papers/projects conclude before students leave campus.

This academic calendar has the same number of classes as any other fall term. By teaching through Labor Day and Fall Break and starting a few days early, we can finish before Thanksgiving and minimize travel for students, which reduces the risk of their contracting the virus and bringing it back to campus. With flu season typically starting in late fall, it is prudent to conclude the term prior to a full-blown influenza outbreak.

If for some reason we are unable to return to the Hilltop in the fall, we will still use this academic calendar. If we determine that students need to return home during the fall term, we will review
whether or not we need a break to move the classes online at that time, in which case the calendar could change.

Note: Staff will receive two additional holidays during the December break, in lieu of Labor Day and Fall Break, taking one rather than three annual leave days.

TRAVEL

There will be no BSC-sponsored international travel during the fall term. Minimal domestic travel will be permitted, primarily for admissions and fundraising.

GUESTS ON CAMPUS

We will limit access to the campus of all guests. Anyone who is not faculty, staff, or a student will be directed to the Student Services building by the Campus Police. They will then have their temperature checked, respond to a series of symptom-checking questions, give a reason for their visit, and the timeframe they plan to stay on campus. If approved, they will receive a visitor’s pass and must wear it for the duration of their visit. No guests will be allowed in residence halls. In general, only vendors, athletic teams, and immediate family will be allowed on campus. We will make an exception for prospective students and their families. Much like athletics, admissions will have to follow a higher set of protocols. There will be no exceptions allowing prospective students to stay in residence halls.

PILLAR 2: DISRUPT TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS

If the virus makes it on to campus, we must disrupt the virus’ ability to transfer from its carrier to another person. As we know, there are only two ways this virus is transferred:
• Through the air from the carrier inside droplets that can be breathed in by the non-infected, and
• Although thought to be less frequent, the virus can also be transferred from a surface if one touches a contaminated surface and then touches their eye, ear, nose, or mouth with their hand.

Through behavioral changes, including social distancing, continuous cleaning of public spaces, and protective equipment, we can disrupt the transfer of this highly contagious virus.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about six feet) for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

In other words, nothing is as effective for preventing contracting the virus as staying away from someone else who might be infected. It will take a lot of work to achieve at least six feet of space between individuals throughout the day. We will have signage and posters throughout BSC campus to remind us of what must be done to protect our community and campus.

CLASSROOMS

The maximum capacity for all teaching spaces (e.g., classrooms, labs, studios) is being determined based on approved social distancing standards and will be clearly marked on each classroom door. See Appendix 2 for capacity numbers for each room. Permanent classroom seating configurations will place students and faculty at least six feet apart. Certain campus spaces not traditionally utilized for instruction, such as theatres and auditoriums, will be adapted to allow for social distancing in sections with larger enrollment. Faculty teaching on campus will also have the option of combining in-person and remote instruction in their courses, reducing the number of students in a class that would meet together physically on a given day. Additional course sections will be added when necessary to ensure that no class enrollment is larger than 30 students.
RESTROOMS

All restroom facilities must be set up so that everyone keeps a six-foot distance from another. This may mean limiting access to public restrooms and/or using every other stall.

First-Year Residence Hall Communal Bathrooms:

- Women’s Halls – Approximately 10 or fewer women will live on each wing, enabling a limit to no more than two women using the restroom at the same time. Resident assistants (RAs) will work with residents to develop a schedule for peak usage times during the day.
- New Men’s Hall – Approximately 18 or fewer men will live on each floor, enabling a limit to no more than three to four men using the restroom at the same time. RAs will work with residents to develop a schedule for peak usage times during the day.
- Anticipate full cleaning twice daily

All Residential Areas - Communal Spaces

- Socializing Informally (more information follows in the Student Life section)
- Within returning students’ suites and apartments, the capacity limit will be double the number of potential residents.
  - Encouragement to remain in common spaces will be shared often, with an expectation that residents remain socially distant and masked.
  - Encouragement to connect within the hallways and social spaces of the halls will be shared often, with the expectation that students remain socially distant and masked.
  - Encouragement will also be shared to explore virtual connections with friends in other spaces in other halls as much as possible.
- Posted capacity numbers will be posted for each elevator (2), laundry room (likely 2), study room (varies), and social/activity space (varies), based on the size of the space, for what will facilitate social distancing.
- Posted notes about expected compliance with social distancing and maximum number of students will be placed in indicated spaces.
- Study and social spaces will be available first-come, first-served.
- For laundry spaces, the expectation will be that residents start laundry, depart to allow others in the space, return promptly to shift items from washers to dryers, and then return when drying is finished to pick up all items.
LIBRARY

Library protocols will include reduced hours of operation, safety procedures for reference and circulation services, and strict social distancing in study areas, to be determined after the new library director starts on July 1.

FOOD SERVICE

We are working with Bon Appetit to deliver quality meals and mitigate the risk of contagion during mealtimes.

Food will be provided in pick-up form as boxed or pre-packaged meals. If students choose to eat together and must take off their masks, they will need to stay six feet apart. There will be limited seating inside the Caf, but there will be more opportunities to sit outside Norton. Masks must be worn at all times in the dining facility when not eating. There will be no lingering or “hanging out” in the Caf. Once the maximum number of occupants is reached, those in line will need to wait until others exit the area.

- **Efficiently Cashless:** To reduce shared surface contact and reduce lag at entry to the Caf and any other dining locations, all BSC students, staff, and faculty will need to use only their BSC ID cards to pay for meals or other items. Faculty and staff can work with the Bursar’s office to add Panther Bucks to their ID cards. Family members of students and any other guests permitted to come to campus will be able to use personal cards on a limited basis.

- **Priority Order:** In the beginning of the term, staff and faculty will have limited service at the Caf. Priority will be given to students during peak hours (likely 8:30-9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.-1 p.m.), and service to staff and faculty will be based on scheduling and capacity availability.

- **Assigned Breakfast and Lunch Meal Blocks:** Class schedules are being reviewed to identify the number of students who need to eat between class blocks and who has greater flexibility in when they visit the Caf and other food service locations, with particular attention to the peak periods during breakfast and lunch. Further information will follow later this summer regarding how students will be able to access the Caf and any other food service points. In this area especially, we will rely on students helping each other to ensure access for their peers with less time available to obtain food.

OTHER OPERATIONS
• **Elevators** should have a maximum of **two people** at any one time. This obviously restricts their carrying capacity, so individuals who are not physically restricted are expected to use the stairs.

• **Water Fountains**: To minimize the spread of germs, drinking fountains will not be in service. Automatic water bottle fillers will still be in service.

## CLEANING REGIME

According to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov):

It may be possible to contract COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sunlight, humidity, and the type of surface. Social distancing helps limit opportunities to come in contact with contaminated surfaces and infected people outside the home.

Campus Operations is establishing cleaning protocols for public spaces such as classrooms, common areas, restrooms, and residence hall bathrooms. These areas will be cleaned on a daily basis and in some cases may require more attention. Handrails and door handles will receive special attention. All cleaning protocols will be based on CDC guidance. To prevent cross-contamination, Operations will clean offices only as requested by the inhabitant through the work order system. Each workspace will be provided with wipes and cleaning solutions so that inhabitants may disinfect as they deem necessary. Cleaning supplies will be provided in each classroom and office. Individuals will be responsible for cleaning their own desks, chairs, including any private workspace or any shared-space location or equipment (e.g., computers, keyboards, A/V and other electrical equipment, copiers, printers, desks and tables, chair arms, light switches, doorknobs, handles, etc.).

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

### CLOTH FACE COVERINGS
The CDC continues to study the spread and effects of the novel coronavirus across the United States. We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of people with coronavirus do not exhibit symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and that even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity — for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing — even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. After social distancing, the face covering is the most effective way to minimize the spread of the virus through the air.

**Every person on campus will be required to wear a face covering that covers their mouth and nose whenever they are in a public space.** This includes faculty, staff, and students. We recommend that each person have **five face coverings** because they should be washed after each use. BSC will provide each student with two masks in their COVID-19 Care Kits, and faculty and staff with one mask each. Faculty will also receive one face shield to allow them a choice of face coverings to wear during classes. Cloth face coverings will need to be washed with regular laundry detergent and stored in a paper bag when not in use. Face coverings will be required for walking on campus, sitting in any indoor meetings, including classes, and going to the restroom. The only exceptions for not wearing a face covering are when occupying a room alone (private office, residence hall room, etc.) or when eating a meal.

There has been press about the risks of the virus spreading via **aerosols**. The experts with whom we have spoken do not see aerosols as a primary way for the virus to spread. [See related article](#).

We are monitoring this discussion and exploring any scientifically substantiated ways to minimize the spread due to aerosols.

**HANDWASHING**

Hand hygiene is an important part of the U.S. response to the international emergence of COVID-19. Practicing hand hygiene, which includes the use of alcohol-based hand rub or handwashing, is a simple yet effective way to prevent the spread of pathogens and infections in healthcare settings. CDC recommendations reflect this important role. (Source: [cdc.gov/coronavirus])

Frequent handwashing is the best way to prevent any virus that might have been picked up from an inanimate object from entering into the body. The CDC recommends washing your hands with soap for **at least 20 seconds**. If handwashing is not readily available, hand sanitizer stations are positioned throughout campus, including on every floor of every academic building.
TESTING

Testing for COVID-19 is critical because knowing who has the virus and isolating them is the key to stopping its spread. Without tests, we cannot know. Testing is not perfectly reliable. Negative tests can give a false sense of confidence. Moreover, someone can be negative and then catch the virus the next day. Nevertheless, testing is the only way to know for sure if someone is a potential source for spreading the virus on campus.

Testing a community of 1,500 people is a significant expense. Additional testing will likely focus on people with symptoms and people with high exposure potential. Making sure that everyone checks their systems and knows when to be tested is an important and effective way to identify those who are positive. That is the idea behind symptom tracking.

SYMPTOM TRACKING

Everyone will receive a “Health Tracker” app after their first test and before arriving on campus. We will require all faculty, staff, and students to input into an app every day to verify that their temperature is normal and that they have no other symptoms associated with COVID-19. According to the CDC, these symptoms are:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (100.4 degrees or more)
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New gastrointestinal symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell

Anyone who does not input into the app in the morning will be reminded via email. If data is still not entered after three days, reporting managers (for staff and faculty) and Student Development (for students) will be alerted. The individual will be required to report to Health Services in Norton to check their symptoms. They will be asked to report to Health Services in the Norton Student Union for a temperature check. Continued lack of compliance could lead to an individual being prohibited from public spaces, including class buildings and dining facilities, and in extreme cases, campus as a whole.

Off-campus guests who are not participating in the Health Tracker app will have to answer a series of symptom-relating questions. Their temperature will also be taken at the gate. Guests
with temperatures greater than 100.4 or appear to have COVID-19 symptoms will not be permitted on campus.

Faculty or staff with symptoms should notify their manager and HR immediately. If students have symptoms, please notify Yvette Spencer, Registered Nurse and Director of Health Services, at healthservices@bsc.edu.

**TESTING**

There is a lot of information – and confusion – about testing. Two types of tests are relevant to COVID-19. The first, the virologic tests that directly detect the virus, are analogous to the nose swabs being obtained at testing sites. The second are serologic (blood) tests that measure the antibodies to the virus made by a person's immune system following infection. We fully expect more progress regarding accuracy, convenience, and costs with testing over the next few months.

Our current strategy:

- Given questions raised currently regarding the accuracy of antibody testing (e.g., blood tests) as well as the expected low percentage of the community with antibodies, we do not see these tests as being helpful at this point.
- The virologic tests (e.g., nose swabs) detect either the genetic material of the virus by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or detect the protein of the virus (called antigen tests). Of these, the PCR test is more accurate but more expensive, and it takes longer to receive results. Starting August 1, we will require that anyone (faculty, staff, or students) returning to campus full time should have received a PCR test whose result is negative within two weeks prior to arrival. Local health departments can provide suggestions on where to get tested, and most health insurance plans will cover testing. Additionally, the Federal law has capped testing costs at $51. However, if you run into difficulties, please reach out to the HR department or Student Services.
- We will partner with Medical Care. They will have a clinic on campus that will provide our students, faculty, and staff with on-demand testing and coronavirus care. Once on campus, the Medical Care team will test our whole campus with a PCR test to increase the chances that we start the semester off virus free.

High potential exposure groups will need to be tested regularly, as much as every week. (See Exposure Groups)

If someone has been in contact (as defined by our tracing protocol) with someone who has tested positive, they will need to be tested.
If someone has symptoms like a fever, they will also need to be tested. Regardless if a test of a symptomatic person is negative, a person with a fever must isolate themselves until the fever is gone for 24 hours without fever-suppressing medication.

Students, faculty, and staff may be subject to campus-wide testing if we believe that there is evidence that the BSC community’s exposure to the virus has significantly increased.

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

We are trying to prevent the virus from coming to our campus. If it is detected on campus, we will go to great lengths to prevent the virus from spreading. If it does spread, we will detect it. When we do, we will do the only thing we can do to manage it: Isolate people who have contracted the virus and isolate those who have been in contact with people who have tested positive.

- **Quarantine** - separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
- **Isolation** - separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Scenarios:

- If you have been in contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, you must quarantine in your respective homes / dorm rooms for 5 days and then be tested at our on-campus clinic.
- **If your test is negative and you have not been symptomatic** for any of the 5 days, then you can return to regular scheduling.
- **If your test is negative and you are symptomatic**, you should wait for 72 hours after your last symptoms before returning to regular scheduling.
- **If your test is positive and you have not been symptomatic** for any of the 5 days, then you must isolate for 10 days after testing positive. After 10 days, in case you develop symptoms, you should wait for 72 hours after your last symptoms before returning to regular scheduling.
- **If your test is positive and you are symptomatic**, you must isolate for at least 10 days after testing AND 72 hours have passed since last symptoms.

We have set aside approximately 30 rooms for isolation, all in the apartments. We are training staff members on contact tracing. We will be working with our healthcare provider, Medical Care, to help us monitor and care for students who need to be isolated.
Positive Test Isolation

If a staff or faculty member tests positive, we will ask them to isolate at home for 10 days and take an additional test prior to returning. If a student tests positive, and if the student is able to return home (lives within 275 miles of campus and does not have anyone in their household in a high-risk category), we will ask the student to return home for 14 days and return only after 72 hours of no fever without fever-suppressing medication. If a student cannot go home, we will quarantine the student in a campus apartment for 14 days. We will have support for that student to bring food and take vital signs during that time. If the student is very sick, we would, of course, help the student in seeking further medical support at local clinics and hospitals.

Positive Test: Contact Tracing (app and individual)

All members of the BSC community will be encouraged to download a contact tracing technology, Exposure Notification. This technology, sponsored by UAB, will be able to tell individuals if they have been in contact with someone who tests positive (as long as they have the app as well). The technology focuses on other individuals who are within six feet of that person for more than 15 minutes at a time without any obstruction between them. All notification is anonymous. If someone in the BSC community has been notified, they should immediately report this notification to health services.

In addition, we will have people who follow up with members of the BSC community who have tested positive. These “contact tracers” will with infected members of the community to figure out who they may have exposure over the previous few days. Then the contract tracers will reach out to those who may have been exposed. This effort might duplicate the Exposure Notification App. Because this is anonymous, we do not know if a person who may have been exposed has already been notified. If someone has been determined to have been exposed (usually someone who has been within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes without masks with the person who contacted the virus), the individual will have to be isolated and tested.

Contact Tracing Team

We will be training staff on campus (not students) to work with the Jefferson County Department of Health with respect to contact tracing.

Designated Quarantine and Isolation Zones

We have set aside approximately 30 rooms for isolation, all in the apartments. Staff will check in with long-term quarantined students (BSC Health Services). Food will be delivered to students
through Bon Appetit. Isolation zone cleaning will be outsourced by our cleaning vendor, Creactiva.

**OTHER AREAS:**

**ADMISSION**

**Resuming Campus Visits:**

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On-campus tour guidelines:

- No more than a total of 10 people per tour.
- Registered student may bring no more than three guests to tour.
- All visitors and guests must bring and wear masks.
- Temperature will be checked by BSC staff before entering Hulsey Welcome Center.
- Upon entering Hulsey, hand sanitizer will be available.
- Guests will enter presentation room for information session.
- After guests leave Hulsey for their tour, the presentation room, restroom, and all door handles will be wiped down/disinfected.

Golf cart tours will be limited to groups of four or fewer from the same family. Guests must sit in the back row of the golf cart to allow for social distancing from the driver. Tour will include exterior viewing of academic buildings and residential halls. When the tour ends, families will meet with admission staff outside in the courtyard to conclude the campus visit.

**Campus Visit Registration Guidelines**
In the newly updated online registration for campus visits, registrants will confirm their understanding of the following:

- My guests and I are required to bring and wear masks.
- I am aware that my guests and I will have our temperature checked upon arrival.
- I am aware that my guests and I are putting ourselves at risk by taking a tour during this time of COVID-19.

The confirmation email will include statements as follows:

- If you are sick or not feeling well, please let us know so we can reschedule your campus visit.
- Remember to bring a face mask/face covering.
- Remember that your temperature will be checked upon arrival.
- All visitors will have to attest to the fact that they do not have the following symptoms:
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fever (100.4 degrees or more)
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Sore throat
  - New gastrointestinal symptoms
  - New loss of taste or smell

**EXPOSURE GROUPS**

**MEDIUM EXPOSURE**

We are assuming that students who live on campus will go off campus periodically. We know that faculty, staff, and commuters go off campus every day. We assume all three groups will be exposed to people outside the gates. Everyone will need to be tested periodically. We have not come up with a detailed testing regime yet, but antigen testing every four weeks is a possibility. It is less likely that insurance will cover these tests; however, you will not have to pay for them.

**HIGH EXPOSURE**
A student who participates in athletics (to the extent we have training or practices in the fall semester) or visual and performing arts will be considered at high exposure. We have not come up with this testing regime yet, but antigen testing every week is a possibility. You will also not have to pay for these tests.

**ATHLETICS**

Since the last presentation of this plan, the presidents of the member colleges of the Southern Athletic Association agreed to suspend all fall conference play. There will be no SAA-sanctioned matches, games or SAA tournaments in the fall. The SAA has not yet decided how to approach contests for winter sports that occur during the latter part of the fall semester. It is the intention of the presidents of the SAA to have fall SAA sports play a conference schedule during the spring semester in 2021.

It is possible that low-contact sports such as golf, tennis, and cross country could have limited fall competition off-campus with no overnight travel. It is possible that soccer, football, and volleyball will have the equivalent of spring training in the fall. It is possible that sports like basketball and swimming could start late in the fall semester. These decisions will depend on how we view the risks of each activity and the overall risk of the spread of virus on campus and in Jefferson County.

By effectively cancelling the fall season, we have a much tighter control over who comes and goes on our campus. We eliminate high risk activities with students from other colleges. We reinforce Pillar One by making it less likely for the virus to come to campus.

More detailed protocols with respect to guests will come in our next update.

**See Appendix 3 for Athletic Training Department Policy and Procedures**

**VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Specific protocols, in addition to social distancing standards, are being developed for the visual and performing arts to ensure the safety of students and faculty in these disciplines. This includes, among other things, the careful planning of student movement in process-based art studio classrooms; dividing larger musical ensemble into smaller groups; and special considerations for the mounting of theatrical productions.

**COMMUTERS**

For students who commute, as well as faculty and staff who do not live on campus, we expect that they will maintain the same social distance and take the same precautions off campus as on.
If anyone rides public transportation, we strongly encourage them to wear masks as well as try to maintain as much distance as possible to fellow commuters. If anyone is exposed to anyone with the virus, they must contact Health Services.

COMMUNICATION

BSC will provide regular “Return to the Hilltop” updates throughout the term via the Monday Morning e-newsletter and via other channels as needed. Updates and detailed plans will also be posted on the BSC web site (bsc.edu/coronavirus). Questions regarding COVID-19 and the plan to return to campus should be sent to covid19questions@bsc.edu.

Throughout the semester, we will structure a COVID-19 Task Force to monitor coronavirus on the Hilltop and in our BSC community. Members of the task force will include the chairs of our working groups, a representative from Jefferson County Department of Health, a representative from Medical Care, one medical expert, the Director of Health Services, and the Chief of Staff. The COVID-19 Task Force will meet weekly to examine new cases and implement strategies to mitigate risk and extinguish the threat.

FLU VACCINES

In order to protect our campus and separate COVID-19 cases from flu cases, every student, faculty, and staff will be required to get an influenza vaccination. This vaccine will be available on campus early in the semester. It will be provided by Medical Care. You will need a medical reason to opt out.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

All indications are that insurance will cover the costs of the first two tests for returning to campus. We will give you instructions on how to bill your insurance company. If you do not have insurance or your insurance company turns you down, please let us know and we will seek out other funds. You will not have to pay for initial testing to return to campus.

Throughout the semester, insurance companies will pay for any tests for symptomatic individuals as well as those who are not symptomatic but have been exposed to the virus. It is not clear if insurance will pay for the additional tests of non-exposed, non-symptomatic people that will administered throughout the semester. We will monitor the status between insurance companies.
and COVID-19 tests carefully, so that our students and employees will not have to pay for these necessary tests. Additionally, we are looking into other funds available for tests.

**STUDENT LIFE**

To support a positive and meaningful student life experience within a safer campus setting, BSC will modify many of the typical programs and activities it provides and oversees for students, as well as offer numerous new experiences. We expect students to engage safely with each other in both formal, planned activities sponsored by various organizations, and in informal settings among their peers, as outlined below. We hope that over time we will be able to expand the number of students and settings in which student gather, similar to what they have enjoyed previously. This expansion will occur as the virus remains limited in impact on campus over the term, and as students meet their behavioral obligations detailed here and in subsequent statements from BSC.

**INFORMAL SOCIALIZING**

As much as reasonably possible, when weather permits, we encourage students to spend time socializing with friends outdoors among the expansive lawns, large trees, and abundant shade on campus, from the Academic Quad to the area around the Lake. We recommend students bringing folding chairs and blankets or other ground covers which they will be comfortable sitting on outdoors. The College has already placed additional seating around the Library wrap-around patio, the Harbert courtyard, and the deck outside the Attic, and will be placing more seating in the shaded areas around the Norton Campus Center.

While socializing at length in the Caf will not be available to students when the term begins, we expect that the additional seating in the main area of campus will permit socially distanced gathering among peers.

Within residential settings, informal socializing will be expected not to exceed twice the number of residents assigned to that space (i.e., a Pierce suite could have up to eight total individuals, a two-bedroom apartment could have up to six total individuals). For the various communal spaces in residential areas, the maximum capacity will be posted by the door, determined by social distancing guidelines.

For the Commuter Lounge, the maximum capacity will be posted by the door. In addition, commuters will be sent information about other easily accessible study and socializing spaces throughout campus.

We expect all students to avoid gathering in off-campus social settings where social distancing and other safety measures are not in place. We trust that by providing a meaningful social
environment managed with reasonable expectations on campus, students will prevent the unnecessary exposure of themselves and others in the campus community.

**FORMAL SOCIALIZING**

Formal, registered, large social activities hosted by BSC organizations, either on campus or in Birmingham, will not be permitted through the first month after classes begin. Decisions about future events do not have a specific timeline at this point. Student Development officials will continue to review decisions about anticipated events as they monitor conditions on campus and in the Birmingham area. As student behaviors and circumstances warrant the adjustment of restrictions and permission for larger registered events to occur, Student Development will communicate any additional processes and protocols that must be followed for various activities to occur.

**CAMPUS PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES**

Campus organizations will be able to host various activities, assuming campus conditions continue to support such gatherings, in compliance with the social distancing guidelines outlined here in the Return to the Hilltop Plan and forthcoming materials from Student Development. Specific information about possible locations and socially distanced capacity, cleaning protocols before and after events and other safety measures, and additional details will be shared with organizational leaders later this summer to permit planning and requests to host programs as students return for the fall term. Programming entities like Quest II and the Cross-Cultural Committee (C3) are already planning numerous programs and activities for students to kick off the fall term.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS**

Campus organizations will be able to hold regular meetings, though in many instances they may need to occur in different spaces from typical locations. For example, Student Government Association meetings will occur in a larger space than the SGA Room, and most Greek organizations’ meetings will need to occur in places on campus much larger than their chapter rooms. Organizational leaders will be expected to complete a request to hold meetings, which will include information about how social distancing, enhanced cleaning, and related expectations will be achieved. Specific guidelines will be communicated later this summer as plans for the fall term become more settled, to enable organizational leaders to request meeting space prior to their return to campus.

**ORIENTATION**

Information about Orientation for new students will be sent separately to them over the summer as BSC prepares for their arrival, with many more details relevant to their new student experience. Currently, we expect in-person Orientation to begin late in the afternoon of
Thursday, August 20, and continue through Sunday, August 23. Some virtual gatherings may occur prior to arrival at BSC, and if necessary, during the Orientation weekend. Once on campus, we anticipate some larger events will occur outdoors in campus amphitheaters and other locations when feasible, with smaller group sessions in classrooms and outdoor locations as weather permits.

**GREEK RECRUITMENT**

Panhellenic Recruitment is tentatively set to begin on September 17. The current plan includes a virtual First-Round of Ice Breakers, with an in-person Second Round for Values Night and in-person Final Round for Preference Night. All houses have been measured and furniture adjustments will be made to permit social distancing to occur among and between talking pairs of current and potential new members. All individuals in the houses will wear masks at all times. Thirty minutes for cleaning and disinfecting will occur between in-person round events. Bid Day details remain to be finalized and will be shared closer to the event, and will follow broader BSC guidelines on visitors and the size of gatherings.

Campus conditions will continue to be monitored leading up to the beginning of recruitment. If circumstances indicate the need to adapt the tentative plan to more virtual rounds or slightly delayed timing, information will be shared with individuals at that time.

Interfraternity Recruitment is expected to begin on September 11. The anticipated plan includes Round Robins occurring outside, in front of each fraternity house; Open Houses in small groups with a sign-in process for each house; and invitation-only Preference Dinners in small groups at the houses. Social distancing guidelines and masks will be expected at all times. Thirty minutes for cleaning and disinfecting will occur between in-person round events. Bid Day details remain to be finalized and will be shared closer to the event and will follow broader BSC guidelines on visitors and the size of gatherings.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

We are living in unprecedented times. Here at Birmingham-Southern, we understand that COVID-19 can bring stress and increased levels of fear and anxiety for our students, staff, and faculty members. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations, and it could take a toll on our mental health. Please reach out to friends or our counseling services if you need or want someone to talk to – as we are all coping with COVID-19 and finding the new normal.

For counseling services before fall term begins, email studev@bsc.edu. During the academic year, please contact Cara Blakes (clblakes@bsc.edu) or Marlena Stowe (mdstowe@bsc.edu).
For employees of BSC, the Employee Assistance Program is available, providing unlimited telephone access to EAP professionals 24 hours a day, three face-to-face sessions with a counselor, and access to a resource library. Call 1-800-316-2796 or visit www.mutualofomaha.com/eap

You may also contact the Crisis Center Hotline at (205) 323-7777.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

We would like to have everyone back on campus in the fall. We understand that this may not be possible. However, all faculty and staff have the opportunity to request accommodation if they are in the high-risk category with respect to dangers of COVID-19. Faculty and Staff should complete the BSC Accommodation Forms and return these to the Human Resources Office as soon as possible but no later than July 10. According to the CDC, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- Are 65 years and older
- Live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Have chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Have serious heart conditions
- Are immunocompromised
- Are severely obese (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Have diabetes
- Have chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis
- Have liver disease

Students in the high-risk category should notify Student Development (studev@bsc.edu). Known students who need private accommodations for medical issues of concern have been placed in apartments or suites that meet their indicated needs in the regular housing selection process. We recognize there are students at this time with undisclosed medical needs, so please contact us if you need accommodation. Also contact us if you have concerns, such as a desire to seek private space for safety, but aren’t necessarily at high-risk. Ability to provide needed spaces will become limited. We will work with you to accommodate your needs to participate in the BSC community.

**COMMUNITY OF BIRMINGHAM**

We will stay in regular touch with our community. We have shared all of our protocol information with the State and County Departments of Health. We have open lines of communication to other colleges and universities in the area. While we are trying to prevent the
virus from coming on campus, we recognize that we are not an island. We can leverage the resources of our community; we have responsibilities to the community as well.

- Alabama Department of Public Health
- Jefferson County Department of Health
- Other Colleges and Universities (UAB, Samford, Miles)
- City of Birmingham
- College Hills and Bush Hills

**DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

Any member of the BSC community who refuses to follow the guidelines set out in this plan (or additional expectations established in the course of the term) must recognize that they are endangering other members of our community. Such an individual will be required to meet with an appropriate supervisor, e.g., the dean of Student Development, work manager, academic chair, or the Provost. If that person is unwilling to meet their communal obligations and their risky behavior continues, they will be asked to depart campus and to complete the term remotely with no requirement on the College’s part for special accommodations. If a student is required to finish the term off campus, the College will not be liable for refunds of room, board, tuition, or fees.

**CONCLUSION**

We have created a plan with input from experts and public health officials, other colleges and universities, and students, staff and faculty. We believe this plan significantly decreases the risk of an outbreak on our campus in the fall. We know that this risk will never be zero. We will continue to tweak this plan as we better understand logistics and as we receive new information on the science. It is likely that treatment and testing will evolve significantly between now and the end of the term. It is also likely that we will have a better understanding on how the virus spreads. There is no doubt that we will have to adjust this plan over time.

The principles of the plan will remain constant. We want to minimize the possibility of this virus coming to our campus. If does it come to our campus, we will work to minimize its spread. And if it does spread, we will look to detect it and isolate it and we will make sure that our community has the best health care available.

The plan forces all of us to change our daily behavior. We do it because we want to be together on the Hilltop. We do it because only by being together we can create the learning experience
that can be called a Birmingham-Southern education. Without this plan, none of this would be possible. So, we will go to these great lengths because we think it is all worth it.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Panther Pledge

Panther Pledge

Prior to arriving and beginning at BSC, I pledge that I will:

- Decrease my potential risk for bringing COVID-19 to campus by reducing my interactions with others through avoiding large gatherings of people, maintaining social distance and mask-wearing when in public spaces, and avoiding contact with anyone I know to have been recently exposed or diagnosed with the virus.
- Complete the online training regarding the Coronavirus, including how to use the Health Tracker app.
- Download and begin to develop the habitual use of the Health Tracker app that I will be required to complete daily once I arrive on campus.
- Report any symptoms of coronavirus through the Health Tracker app which BSC Health Services will receive, and respond to their contact to me in follow up, as well as seek medical support for COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fever of 100° or more, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new gastrointestinal symptoms, and/or loss of taste or smell).
- Obtain a negative COVID-19 test prior to my arrival at BSC for the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Once I arrive and begin classes at BSC, I pledge that I will:

- Support essential safety measures related to COVID-19, including:
  o monitoring, reporting, and seeking care for any personal virus-related symptoms;
  o practicing social distancing per indicated guidelines;
  o wearing face masks where required or requested;
  o following essential protocols in public, common use spaces, like in the Caf;
  o maintaining clean hands through regular hand washing and/or using hand sanitizer.
- Follow the above-listed virus-related safety measures in my off-campus activities, as a campus resident who engages in work, internship, religious, social, and other personal activities beyond campus as well as someone who goes home periodically, and as a commuter who lives away from campus and engages in the community in numerous ways.
• Complete the Health Tracker app daily.
• Report any symptoms of COVID-19 as listed above through the Health Tracker app or directly to Health Services at BSC, and remain in quarantine and isolation until I receive follow up and final clearance from Health Services at BSC.
• Undergo COVID-19-related testing when notified by BSC that such is needed.
• Maintain awareness of virus-related information provided by BSC.
• Ensure that my immunizations are up to date and obtain a flu shot, absent any documented vaccination concerns.

I acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased my personal responsibility with respect to my personal health and safety, and that of the entire BSC community. I recognize that if I do not adhere to the Panther Pledge, I am putting my peers, friends, faculty, and staff at risk unnecessarily. I understand that if I cannot abide by these expectations, I may be asked to finish the academic term off campus.

To minimize the risks of contracting as well as spreading this highly contagious virus to the other members of the BSC community, and so that I may engage fully in the academic year of 2020-2021, I pledge to follow the rules and guidelines set by the BSC administration, outlined in this Panther Pledge.

Signature: __________________________  Dated: __________________________
### Appendix 2: Classroom Capacity Numbers

**BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE**  
Classrooms / Labs  
Social Distancing Maximum Student* Seating Capacities  
(*cap does not include instructor = updated June 2020)

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**HILL**

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* Equipped with videoconferencing system & interactive touchscreen Mondopad
Appendix 3: Athletic Training Department Policy and Procedures

Birmingham-Southern College
Athletic Training Department

COVID-19 Policy and Procedures
2020-2021
The following manual is an outline of the standard operating procedures and solutions due to the novel COVID-19 for the Birmingham-Southern College Athletic Training Department. The signatures below represent approval for the institution of these policies and procedures.

Approved by ____________________________________________  __________________________
Team Physician  Date

Approved by ____________________________________________  __________________________
Head Athletic Trainer  Date

Approved by ____________________________________________  __________________________
Athletic Director  Date
Section I Daily operations
Daily Operations for Staff ATC’s
Daily Cleaning of ATR
ATR Hours/Appointments
Physical Therapy Hours/Appointments
Practice Recommendations
Cold/Hot Tub Use
Travel

Section II: Physicals/PPE
PPE COVID-19 screening
Physicals

Section III: Rules for Athletes
ATR
Practice
Travel

Section IV: Quarantine
Policy and Procedures

Section V:
COVID-19 EAP

Appendix:
A – Return to Work
B – COVID-19 screening sheet
C – Assumption of Risk COVID-19 wording
COVID-19:

COVID-19 is caused by a new Coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many species of animals. This virus is easily spread from person to person mainly from droplets of saliva from coughing or sneezing. At this time there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. Information is always changing, and this document will evolve as the changes happen.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to lay out new policies, procedures, recommendations, and rules changes due to COVID-19 and its effects on daily interactions. Birmingham-Southern College Athletic Training Department continues to be committed to providing excellent health care through prevention, evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation to all Birmingham-Southern College student-athletes.

Section I: Daily Operations

Daily Operations for Staff ATCs

Once all Staff ATCs have gone through the Return to Work protocol (see Appendix A), we will continue to make sure to monitor ourselves and each other so we can continue to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Our policy for daily screenings for all staff ATCs are as follows:

- Daily temperature checks
- Pulse oximeter reading
- Self-reporting the following symptoms to Head ATC if experienced in the past 24-48 hours:
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fever (100.4 degrees or more)
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Sore throat
  - New gastrointestinal symptoms
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Contact with someone who recently tested positive for COVID-19
If any of the Staff ATCs report these symptoms, they must be seen by a doctor to be tested and cleared to return to work. If they test positive, then we will follow BSC’s policy on how to quarantine and return to work.

Staff ATCs will keep socially distant from other staff members and athletes as best as possible. If interactions have to be closer than six feet, masks must be worn. A mask will be worn at all times if outside the ATC’s office during treatment hours. Masks will be worn outside, unless maintaining a constant six-foot radius.

Staff ATCs will disinfect (hand sanitizer or soap) their hands after each session with an athlete before moving onto the next athlete. We will also disinfect any surface an athlete or staff member has touched or used after each treatment session. Sanitizing will be done with Clavicide, bleach solution, Clorox wipes, or similar product that has been shown effective in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Gloves will be used for any manual therapy sessions. New gloves are required for every treatment session. Pillowcases will be changed after each treatment session or not used at all.

**Daily Cleaning of Athletics Training Room**

After all rehabilitation sessions have been completed for the day, ATC staff will do a final wipe down of all surfaces in the ATR. Disinfecting will be done with Clavicide, bleach solution, Clorox wipes, or what solution is deemed to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

This includes, but not limited to:
- Countertops
- Treatment tables
- Taping tables
- Cardio Equipment
- Game ready covers
- Doorknobs

Laundry will be done at minimum every other day.

**ATR Hours/Appointments**

In order to keep social distancing guidelines, all rehabs/treatments will be appointment based only. All student-athletes will sign up for 45-minute time blocks for rehab sessions. A link to sign up for rehab times will be available under the Athletic Training tab on the BSC sports website. The link will also be sent through GroupMe, email, and/or text by either the team ATC or the coach. Once the student-athlete arrives for their scheduled appointment, they will be
screened with a temperature check, pulse oximeter, and asked if they’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24 to 48 hours. If they have a fever, low pulse oximeter reading, and/or symptoms associated with COVID-19, they will not be allowed to enter the ATR, and will be sent to a doctor for further evaluation.

All student-athletes MUST schedule an appointment in order to be seen. If they show up without an appointment, they will not be seen. However, if a student-athlete cancels an appointment, does not show, or a time slot is available, the student-athlete without an appointment will be seen. If a student-athlete is more than 15 minutes late without given notice, there is no guarantee they will be able to receive treatment. A maximum of eight student-athletes can sign up for a time block.

Rehab time slots will be reserved for student-athletes with current injuries, not just ice/stim and/or “feel good” rehabs. We will offer days and time slots specifically for those athletes that need a little extra recovery.

**ATR Hours for the Academic Year:**

- Main ATR (Student Services Building): 10:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Downstairs ATR (Bill Battle): 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (closed noon to 1 p.m.)
- Krulak Stadium ATR (football only): 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Physical Therapy Hours/Appointments**

In order to keep social distancing guidelines, all on campus physical therapy sessions will be appointment-based only. All student-athletes will have to sign up for a time block for a PT session. A link to sign up for physical therapy times will be available under the Athletic Training tab on the BSC sports website (link). It will also be sent through GroupMe, email, and/or text by either the team ATC or the coach. Once the student-athlete arrives for their scheduled appointment, they will be screened with temperature check, pulse Ox, and asked if they’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24-48 hours. If they have a fever, low pulse Ox reading, and/or symptoms associated with COVID-19, they will not be allowed to enter the ATR, and will be sent to a doctor for further evaluation.

Physical therapy sessions will take place outside of the ATR hours. They will either be 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. or 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Times and days will be determined by the Physical Therapist and the Head Athletic Trainer. There will also be a limit of how many student-athletes can sign up for a time block, which will be a maximum of three to four per time slot. All student-athletes MUST schedule an appointment in order to be seen. If they show up without an appointment, they will not be able to be seen.
Practice Recommendations

In order to keep social distancing guidelines and to help decrease the spread of COVID-19, we believe that the following recommendations will be best and are highly recommended.

Pre-practice taping

For larger teams, consider a multi-stage practice to decrease the number of athletes in the locker room and in the ATR for pre-practice taping. If multi-stage practice is not doable, then consider staggering athletes in groups (offense & defense, grouped by every other locker, etc.) to avoid crowding. This should also be considered for pre-practice taping/bracing, heat, foam rolling, etc. No more than six to eight student-athletes will be allowed in any training room at one time. Another consideration will be for coaches to allow enough time for the team’s ATC to tape/brace student-athletes prior to practice. For larger groups, it is recommended that a minimum of 45 minutes be allowed so that all student-athletes will start practice on time. It is also recommended that any athlete with a chronic ankle injury wear an ankle brace either provided by athlete to ATC staff. This will also decrease the amount of student-athletes in the ATR at one time, and decrease the time needed for pre-practice taping. Acute ankle sprains can/will be taped.

For medium to small teams, it is still recommended to staggering athletes in groups (offense and defense, grouped by every other locker, etc.) to avoiding crowding. This should also be considered for pre-practice taping/bracing, heat, foam rolling, etc. No more than six to eight student-athletes will be allowed in any training room at one time. Heating, foam rolling, etc. could also be done in the locker room while other athletes are being taped in the ATR. Coaches should still be considerate with allowing enough time for ATC to tape all athletes, even with smaller groups.

Water

Since COVID-19 is mainly spread through saliva, changes need to be made for water supply for all practices. Athletes will need to bring their own water bottles, with enough water to last most of practice. It is recommended, especially for outdoor sports, that athletes purchase an insulated ½ gallon to gallon size water bottle to be able to keep water cool. They will also need to supply their own ice and will not be able to use the ice machines in any of the ATRs.

Water stations will be available during practices for refills, but only the ATC or a work-study student can refill the student-athletes water bottle. For competitions, it is recommended that the student-athlete still bring their own water bottles already filled. Refill stations will be available. Cups may be available during competition, but the ATC or work-study student must be the one to fill them. Student-athletes will not be able to fill their own water.
Ice, injury ice and ice machine use

As stated above, student-athletes will not be able to use any of the ice machines in the ATRs. This is to reduce risk of contamination or spreading of the virus. Injury ice will be provided post practice, but athletes must request it. The team ATC will ask all athletes if they need an ice bag at the end of each practice. Ice bags will be made and placed in a designated cooler for pick up. This is to reduce crowding in the ATR post practice.

Post-practice showers

It is recommended that all athletes shower in their designated locker room post practice to decrease spread and exposure once leaving the facility. Athletes will either bring their own towel or be supplied towels by the coach. If an athlete brings their own towel, they must wash it daily or bring a clean towel for every post practice shower. NO sharing of towels is allowed. Student-athletes may also want to bring a new change of clothes for post practice (not the clothes that came in with) to also help decrease spreading of the virus.

Post practice equipment and locker room disinfection

It will be the coach’s responsibility to clean all used equipment and locker rooms daily. This can be done with a fogger, sanitizing spray, bleach solution, Clorox wipes, etc. The team ATC can assist in this process, if needed, but it is not their responsibility.

Cold/Hot Tub Use

To decrease the risk of exposure and spread, the hot/cold tubs will not be available for student-athlete use.

Ice baths will not be available for post practice. Ice baths will only be available for heat-related issues. Hot baths will only be used as a rehab tool.

Travel:

Travel considerations should follow federal, state, local, and institutional public health recommendations related to screening for travel. Prior to travel, all student-athletes, coaches, and staff that are traveling will be screened by the team ATC with a temperature and pulse oximeter check and asked if they’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24 to 48 hours. The screenings will take place one to two hours prior to start of travel. Screenings will also be done prior to leaving the travel destination to return home. If any student-athlete, coach,
or staff member present with symptoms before or during travel, they will be sent to a doctor to be further tested.

If the team ATC cannot travel with the team, one of the coaching staff will administer the screenings. The coach will be given a thermometer and a pulse oximeter by the team ATC prior to travel. If any student-athletes or coaching staff present with symptoms on the road, the head coach must contact the team ATC immediately.

Section II: Physicals/PPE

PPE COVID-19 Screening Sheet

A COVID-19 Pre-Participation Exam (PPE) will be included in the 2020-21 physicals. A COVID-19 screening questionnaire (see appendix B) will be given to all returners, newcomers, and transfer student athletes upon arriving on campus. Returning athletes will need to attend their scheduled sports physical in order to fill out the questionnaire and be cleared by the team physician. All other athletes will be given the questionnaire when they arrive for their scheduled physical. ALL student-athletes must complete the screening sheet and be cleared by the team physician in order to participate in their sport. Any athlete that shows sign and symptoms or is suspected having COVID-19 will be sent to a doctor for further testing.

All student-athletes will also be given an updated Assumption of Risk sheet with added COVID-19 wording. They must sign it in order to play their sport. See Appendix C for wording.

Physicals

All newcomers and transfers will need to attend their scheduled team’s physical. All physicals will be held in the Hall of Fame room inside Bill Battle Coliseum. When student-athletes arrive for their scheduled time, they will be screened with a temperature check, pulse oximeter reading, and asked if they’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24 to 48 hours. They will then be seated in Bill Battle spaced two seats apart until they are asked to go into the Hall of Fame room for their physical. Only three to four student-athletes will be allowed in the Hall of Fame room at one time. All staff and AT’s must wear masks during physicals.

Section III: Rules for Athletes

ATR Rules for Athletes

- You must schedule a time slot for rehab.
• You will be screened with a temperature check, pulse Ox reading, and asked if you’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24 to 48 hours.
• You must show up at your scheduled appointment time, not early or late.
• If you are more than 15 minutes late without giving notice, there is no guarantee that you will be able to receive treatment.
• If you need to reschedule, please cancel your appointment time as soon as possible so other athletes can schedule.
• If you show up without an appointment, you will not be able to receive treatment unless there has been a cancellation or a no-show that is more than 15 minutes late.

Physical Therapy Rules for Athletes

• You must schedule a time slot for physical therapy.
• You will be screened with temperature check, pulse ox reading, and asked if you’ve had any symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 24-48 hours.
• You must show up at your scheduled appointment time, not early or late.
• If you are more than 15 minutes late without giving notice, there is no guarantee that you will be able to receive physical therapy.
• If you need to reschedule, please cancel your appointment time as soon as possible so other athletes can schedule.