



Cornell University

## CORNELL UNIVERSITY REACTIVATION PLAN

On June 30, Cornell University [announced plans](#) for the fall 2020 semester, which includes a hybrid approach to a residential semester (in-person, online and in-person/online hybrid teaching modalities), robust virus testing, and modifications to the academic calendar (classes beginning September 2, eliminating fall breaks, students returning home for Thanksgiving and finishing the semester remotely).

These plans, further described below, apply to Cornell's Ithaca campus (and Cornell AgriTech in Geneva, New York<sup>1</sup>), and were informed by the university's [reactivation planning committee](#) process and guidance from New York state (NYS) and local public health officials. Cornell is following [NY Forward guidance for higher education](#) for its reactivation planning; this document details the university's reactivation plans in-line with the [checklist for higher education](#) provided by NYS. In some instances, Cornell relied on industry-specific guidance from NY Forward related to its operation of research labs, food service, office-based work, and retail business activities.

### REOPENING: PLANS FOR RESTARTING CAMPUS OPERATIONS INCLUDING STUDENT, FACULTY AND STAFF RETURN

#### I. CAPACITY

Plan's for reactivating Cornell's Ithaca campus include the return of students, faculty and staff. Students will be asked to arrive in Ithaca on assigned dates beginning in August, with a set number arriving each day to address NYS entry quarantine requirements, enable testing and other move-in procedures, as described below. The first day of classes is scheduled for September 2, and the last day of in-person instruction is scheduled for November 24. After the Thanksgiving holiday, all instruction will be remote, and students are being asked not to return to campus until the spring 2021 semester.

##### a. *Capacity on campus*

Cornell is a large institution with an expansive physical footprint, which affords it the ability to repurpose certain physical locations to meet requirements for physical distance. Cornell will follow NYS guidance for all spaces, from gyms to art galleries. As described further below, certain large buildings on campus will be repurposed to create expanded physical distancing space for classrooms as well as spaces for students to study to reduce density in libraries and other spaces traditionally used for studying. Offices, dining halls and libraries on campus will be limited to 50% occupancy.

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<sup>1</sup> While generally following the parameters set forth in this plan for the Ithaca campus, Cornell's campus on Roosevelt Island in NYC is finalizing details relevant to their reopening and will post them to the Cornell Tech website in the near future.

- i. Remote work and instructional opportunities*  
Consistent with NYS guidelines, and in order to de-densify campus, staff are encouraged to work remotely if they are able to do so effectively. Faculty can opt to teach their courses online and conduct office hours and advising meetings virtually, rather than in-person. Students can choose courses with or without in-person instruction.
- ii. Dining*  
Cornell Dining is responsible for providing meals to students who reside on campus. Consistent with NYS guidelines for dining, and to ensure proper physical distancing, all dining halls will provide to-go service, tables will be spaced appropriately, and disposable plates and cutlery will be used. In-person dining options will be available using a reservation system. Individuals seated at the same table must be members of the same party but may reside in different residences, with a maximum of 10 persons per table. Seating at counter areas and communal tables will be permitted only if at least 6 feet can be maintained between parties.
- iii. Events*  
All in-person events at Cornell are restricted to less than the number permitted by NY Forward guidance (currently 50 persons). The university is prohibiting visitors from outside the Cornell community from attending in-person concerts, meetings and lectures, a restriction that will continue through the fall semester. In some cases, these events will be live-streamed and/or recorded for off-campus audiences. Employee and Student Assembly meetings are being held virtually and will remain virtual for the fall semester. Department and other seminars will remain online for the fall semester. Alumni events such as Homecoming and the Trustee-Council Annual Meeting will be held virtually, and campus tours for prospective students and their families will continue to be virtual only.
- iv. Physical (social) distancing*  
Cornell is requiring everyone on campus to have a mask or compliant face covering (“mask” or “face covering”) and physically distance. Physical (social) distancing is described throughout the planning process for reactivating campus and in each relevant section of this document. This document also describes processes that must be followed when physical distancing is not able to be maintained. Masks are required to be worn inside, unless alone in a personal office or dorm room. When six feet of distance cannot be maintained outside, masks are required to be worn throughout Cornell’s campus.
- v. Testing capacity*  
The university has developed plans for screening and diagnostic testing of students, faculty and staff upon their return to campus for SARS-CoV-2. Section III below (“Testing”), describes the testing methodology and scope, notification of test results, and process for those arriving to campus to be tested.
- vi. Residential living capacity*  
Residential living plans include protocols for capacity, enhanced cleaning and disinfection, appropriate physical distancing, use of acceptable face coverings in common areas, gatherings and activities, and visitors; special housing considerations for students who are immunocompromised or have an underlying health condition (such

students self-identify to Cornell Student Disability Services for accommodations); isolation/quarantine processes; and rules that residential students must agree to follow.

On-campus housing will be limited to single- and double-occupancy rooms, and a shared commitment to health and safety behaviors will be added to roommate/housemate agreements. Bathrooms will be assigned to specific rooms to reduce the number of people sharing those spaces. While kitchenettes and lounges will remain open, they will have visible signage and six-foot markings throughout.

The pre-COVID total maximum bed count was 6,801, in addition to 371 units located in a graduate housing complex known as Hasbrouck Apartments. The fall 2020 maximum bed count is 6,574, plus 371 graduate units at Hasbrouck Apartments. The elimination of triple and quad rooms removes 227 beds from the previous year.

*vii. Quarantine and isolation capacity*

Cornell is contracting with local hotels to have 1,200 rooms available at various times during the fall semester for quarantine and isolation needs. Space in residence halls is also being reserved for these purposes.

To safely transport persons who are ill and/or are suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19, Cornell's Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) has developed transport and post-transport safety procedures for Cornell's shuttle service, CULift. Procedures include PPE, face covering, distancing and vehicle disinfection requirements. CULift drivers are to be trained on the procedures prior to transporting any ill person and are to instruct passengers of the requirements upon pickup.

*viii. Local medical capacity*

Cornell, Cayuga Medical Center, and the Tompkins County Health Department are working jointly to establish a dashboard for hospital bed capacity, positive cases, negative cases and pending cases. This dashboard will be used as one of the indicators for monitoring COVID-19 cases.

Cayuga Medical Center has 212 beds and its three-phase surge plan would increase capacity for a total of 318 critical care and ICU beds and 50 ventilators. Cornell is partnering with locally-based Cayuga Health System for COVID-19 testing and virtual medical visits. The university also plans to use the Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC) at the College of Veterinary Medicine, in consultation with the NYS Department of Health Wadsworth, to expand PCR testing capabilities in Ithaca.

Cornell Health, the university's on-campus student health facility, will provide virtual and in-person visits for students. Faculty, staff or students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will need a health professional's clearance to return to campus for work or in-person classes.

## II. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

A university-wide face covering procedure is in place outlining requirements, mask use signage has been established and all campus employees have received training on proper donning and doffing of masks.

The university's facial covering and PPE requirements comply with state and local public health laws, regulations and university policy. Protocols for obtaining and providing acceptable face coverings to all employees of the institution can be found on Cornell's Environment, Health and Safety COVID-19 [website](#). Cornell will be providing face coverings and other PPE as described in these protocols. Upon their arrival to campus, students will receive two face coverings in their welcome kit, and protocols for use may be found [here](#).

The university has created a central store and distribution methodology for critical COVID-19 supplies that includes:

- 100,000 disposable masks distributed and 400,000 ordered; 3,000 reusable masks distributed and 27,000 in stock.
- 4,000 12-ounce bottles of hand sanitizer distributed, 9,000 in stock, and 200 hand sanitizer stations set up.
- 4,000 bottles of disinfectant spray distributed, 26,000 in stock.
- 3,000 boxes (100 count) of Nitrile gloves distributed, 148 boxes in stock.
- 500 lab gowns distributed, 500 in stock.

## III. TESTING

The university has developed plans for screening and diagnostic testing of students and employees for SARS-CoV-2 upon their return to campus, including individuals with recent international or long-distance travel and/or individuals from areas with widespread community transmission of the virus. Experiences at other institutions of higher education indicate that there will likely be individuals positive for COVID-19 among those returning to campus. In addition, the university plans ongoing surveillance testing of faculty, staff and student throughout the fall semester. The "Monitoring" section below provides additional detail on the university's testing plan.

## IV. RESIDENTIAL LIVING

All Cornell students living on campus, as well as those living off campus, will be required to agree to obey specific personal behaviors that are designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and influenza, and to be tested for COVID-19 as frequently as the university requests. This behavioral compact will be posted for transparency about Cornell's expectations of all returning students. Initial, "gateway" surveillance testing of all students is required and ongoing surveillance testing throughout the fall is expected to be weekly.

**a. *Move-in process***

Incoming and returning students will be asked to arrive in Ithaca on a specific date and will include instructions on best practices to avoid infection while still at home and during travel. Students planning to travel to the Ithaca region for the fall semester, whether living on- or off-campus, will be asked to be tested (if possible) for COVID-19 in advance of their travel, and instructed to self-quarantine for two weeks prior to travel if coming from a high-prevalence area. Those students testing positive will be asked not to travel to the Ithaca region until they have recovered from infection and have been cleared to come by Cornell Health. Students testing positive before their travel to the Ithaca region will be subject to isolation requirements as indicated by local authorities in their places of permanent residence. Those who test negative will be invited to travel to campus, as will students who cannot obtain a test.

Upon arrival to the Ithaca region, each student will be provided a questionnaire concerning symptoms or recent contact with anyone known to be positive for COVID-19. All students will be tested for COVID-19 (see Section on “Monitoring” below). Any student who tests positive will be counseled by the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) on the appropriate course of action, including isolation. Students who test negative and complete the campus [Daily Check](#) (a tool required of all faculty, staff and students on days they plan to be on campus) may access Cornell facilities, following appropriate physical distancing, face covering and hygiene policies.

As noted, the student behavioral compact is designed to outline requirements for physical distancing, mask wearing and expectations for socializing throughout the semesters. Students who fail to comply with the behavior compact will face sanctions from limitations on their ability to access buildings or the university’s on-line systems to suspension or expulsion.

**b. *Welcome kits***

Incoming students will receive a welcome kit containing:

- Two reusable face coverings/masks;
- One 30-second digital thermometer;
- One personal-size hand sanitizer; and
- One touchless stylus keyring tool (a no-touch door handle opening tool with stylus function for touchscreen buttons and other high-touch surfaces).

**c. *Guidelines***

The terms and conditions of the housing contract for students living in on-campus housing, have been adjusted to address student behavior and include specific requirements designed to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. During the move-in phase, students will be provided information about what is known about the transmission of COVID-19 and then guided to discuss their personal experiences with quarantine during the pandemic. Using discussion prompts, students will then come to agreements about issues such as: protocol for inviting visitors; shared responsibility for disinfecting surfaces; wearing face coverings within the unit (e.g. common areas); socializing; and how to let others know if the agreement is not being followed.

## V. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

Classrooms, shared spaces and activities are being adapted to limit the opportunity for the spread of COVID-19.

### **a. Classrooms**

Cornell's goal is to ensure that the university is offering sufficient in-person classes for all levels of students and curricular goals (e.g., general education and distribution requirements, freshman writing seminars, required courses in majors, small seminars for upper division students), and to adhere to NYS higher education guidelines. In order to accomplish these goals, Cornell is devising a course schedule that takes advantage of all available classroom resources and will differentiate between those that are able to use interchangeable spaces (e.g., lectures, discussion sections, seminars) and those for which special facilities are required to ensure appropriate levels of physical distancing. In addition, Cornell will reduce class sizes and require assigned seating in each classroom to reduce the amount of incidental physical contact and time spent finding seats. Seats will be situated six feet apart and face coverings are required in all classrooms and building interiors at Cornell.

The classroom scheduling process focuses on the portion of the schedule that uses interchangeable spaces. A schedule implementation team is providing guidance and oversight to reduce class size. In some cases, classroom sizes will be reduced to one-third or one-half, with groups of students alternating attending class meetings in-person and online. Class size restrictions will depend on configurations that take into account physical distancing requirements.

### **b. Shared study and project rooms**

Shared study rooms and project rooms will have six-foot distancing between desks and will be limited to no more than 50 people. However, if the space is extremely large (based on layout egress, HVAC system and other factors), additional occupancy may be possible if it meets NYS guidelines and is approved by the University Architect.

### **c. Office hours**

Instructors will be asked to hold virtual office hours whenever possible. However, faculty who wish to meet with advisees in person may do so, provided they are able to maintain strict distancing, wear masks and keep their office doors open (for air flow and to increase compliance with health precautions). Small conference rooms may also be used for such meetings.

### **d. Other shared spaces**

Other shared spaces within the dorms, such as kitchenettes and lounges, will have visible six-foot spacing markers. Extra furniture will be removed to ensure distancing. Cornell does not plan to close kitchenettes and lounges since closures would likely push students into different, less visible spaces. We will continue to encourage safe use of public spaces. The shared agreements students will create with their roommate/housemates referenced in Section IV ("Residential Living") above, will cover these shared living spaces.

**e. *Safety in dining halls***

A system for contactless ordering and pick-up of food from campus dining facilities has been set up for all dining halls that will remain open. Dine-in options will be available using a reservation system that will cap maximum occupancy at 50%, in compliance with NYS guidelines. Buffet lines have been eliminated; instead, all food will be served by staff and disposable plates and cutlery will be used. To adhere to the required six-foot separation between tables, extra chairs will be removed and plexiglass separators will be installed where needed. All floors will be marked to clearly signal the required six-foot distances for food pickup, payment and restroom use. Dish machine operators will be deployed to frequently disinfect surfaces, since there will be few dishes to wash other than those used in production. Very small dining facilities that cannot accommodate NYS requirements will remain closed.

**VI. RESTART OPERATIONS**

Buildings are being safely reopened. Cleaning, disinfection and reactivation of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, water systems and other key facility components are following industry protocols. For additional information, please visit Cornell's Environment, Health and Safety [website](#).

**a. *Fume hoods***

All fume hoods that were idled during the COVID-19 shutdown have been reactivated pursuant to un-hibernation procedures, including:

- Removing all chemicals and equipment from hood benches;
- Identifying all supply and exhaust air flow sources and measuring flow rates; and
- Balancing pressures of rooms and testing alarms.

**b. *Water systems***

Cornell maintains its own potable water production facilities that provide water to the Ithaca campus. The system ramp-up consisted of:

- Verifying appropriate residual chlorine level at the meter entering the building;
- Water flushing beginning at highest part of building;
- Running all cold-water faucets and showers simultaneously (old water tap running until cold water is sensed and chlorine residual is detected);
- Running hot water faucets and showers simultaneously until a chlorine residual is detected; and
- Installing new filters and flushing system.

**c. *HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning)***

A recently published paper by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) makes a number of recommendations for dealing with coronavirus and other infectious pathogens. The following recommended measures are being implemented:

- Increase outdoor air ventilation during low-occupancy hours and disable demand control ventilation;
- Open minimum outside air dampers to the extent possible to minimize the recirculation of air;
- Bypass energy wheel recovery ventilation systems where installed;
- Replace filters with high efficiency filters (MERV-13 or better) and seal edges preventing bypass air; and
- Deploy portable room HEPA filter air cleaners.

## VIII. EXTRACURRICULARS

Policies regarding extracurricular programs and activities will follow NYS guidelines, including physical distancing and face coverings. Extracurricular activities are an important part of student life. Extracurricular clubs, activities and events which often provide opportunities for social connectedness and belonging will be significantly modified to adhere to physical distancing measures or suspended based on NYS guidelines and health and safety considerations. Cornell has invested resources in supporting and sponsoring safer social and extracurricular experiences for students. Examples include free access to outdoor recreational activities and equipment, virtual “drop-in” hours for student organization leaders to ask staff for help in planning safer events, creating new outdoor spaces that can be used by student groups (e.g., with six-foot circles) and sponsoring competitive student ideas for innovative programming.

### **a. Events**

Consistent with restrictions regarding visitors to campus, technology will be leveraged to support virtual lectures, concerts and other public events. On-campus social events will align with state and local mandates around maximum allowable size of gatherings, as well as expectations for distancing and mask wearing. The university will incentivize and support entirely new types of social activities that enable students to connect and have meaningful experiences while following public health guidelines.

### **b. Greek Life**

Cornell’s division of Student and Campus Life oversees Greek Life activities through its Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, which is working to promote safer social engagement through, educational programming for social events, student monitors to help monitor density at events and compliance with physical distancing and mask requirements.

In addition, the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life is collaborating with Greek student leadership to develop revised recruitment protocols that will comply with NYS public health guidelines (more use of virtual technologies). The chapters must agree to comply with NYS guidelines at all times. This includes mandates related to physical distancing, the size of social gatherings, and face coverings. All rules governing students living on campus (see Section IV above) will also govern students living in sororities and fraternities.

Greek Life house members will also receive education regarding the increased risks introduced by large communal living and will be advised of the following:

- Importance of creating new house agreements to protect each member's safety;
- Academic disruptions associated with being placed in quarantine during the semester;
- Requirement to wear masks and comply with physical distancing guidelines whenever there are visitors in the house;
- Greek Life organizations be required to work with Student and Campus Life on guidelines for external vendors (e.g., house chefs) to help maintain health and observe safety protocols; and
- More stringent cleaning regimens and restrictions on communal dining.

**c. Athletics**

The Ivy League has cancelled fall 2020 athletic events. Practice and training events for students that conform with state or university guidelines are permissible. The status of the winter and spring schedules will be determined at a later date.

**VIII. VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

According to the World Health Organization, people of all ages can be infected by COVID-19. However, individuals over 65, as well as individuals with preexisting medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease) or compromised immune systems are considered to be at higher risk.

While the university cannot compel individuals in higher-risk categories to avoid in-person instruction or other work, the university will urge these individuals to do so. Moreover, Cornell will allow faculty to teach their courses online and conduct office hours and advising meetings virtually, rather than in-person. With respect to staff, Cornell is encouraging those who are able to work remotely to continue to do so. Cornell Human Resources' [COVID-19 Workplace Guidance](#) includes a section on special considerations and accommodations for vulnerable personnel. A process is in place for supervisors to work with Cornell Human Resources to consider additional avenues and accommodations for work that cannot be done remotely, including accommodations based on personal medical conditions and for those caring for vulnerable family members.

Students will also be able to choose courses with or without in-person instruction. Students (including graduate student assistants) with personal health conditions (physical and mental health) that may qualify them for disability protections are asked to register with [Cornell's Student Disability Services \(SDS\)](#) and complete a Disability Self-Disclosure Form. Students will be assigned an SDS counselor who will recommend accommodations.

**IX. HYGIENE, CLEANING AND DISINFECTION**

Campus-wide cleaning and disinfection [protocols](#) have been established for classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, dining halls and other facilities, as have methods to promote hand and respiratory hygiene among all individuals on campus.

**a. Building care practices**

As Cornell restarts campus activities, building care staff will be at the forefront of preparing our buildings to welcome back students, faculty and staff. Building care uses only EPA List N-approved

disinfectants found to be effective at killing the virus that causes COVID-19. This, along with the expectation that all building occupants practice recommended handwashing procedures and follow physical distancing and face-covering guidelines, will help provide a safer environment for everyone.

While cleaning is important, it is only a component of any overall risk mitigation strategy. Other practices for building care staff will employ include:

- Placement of additional hand sanitizer stations (and inventory for restocking) in identified locations near building entrances and interior common areas throughout campus;
- Creation and maintenance of a two-month inventory of disinfectant concentrate and disinfectant wipes for future emergency needs; and
- Placement of disinfectant spray and microfiber towels for use in rooms/spaces that are identified by unit facility directors (such as conference rooms, general office areas and break rooms) for use by building occupants. Custodians will check and refill disinfectant spray bottles once per day.

***b. Three cleaning categories***

The university has established three cleaning categories: category 1 (standard cleaning procedures) is the pre-COVID-19 cleaning process; category 2 (elevated disinfection protocol) is an enhanced cleaning methodology that targets high-touch areas to reduce fomite spread of COVID19; and category 3 (deep cleaning protocol) is a targeted cleaning process triggered when a building occupant tests positive for COVID-19. As the campus reopens, ongoing category 2 cleaning and disinfection tasks (further defined [here](#)) will be performed daily to include full cleaning and disinfecting of:

- All restrooms, showers, and locker rooms;
- Classrooms, lecture halls, public offices, hallways and conference/meeting rooms;
- Elevators, open gathering spaces, entryways and foyers; and
- High-touch items such as light switches, door handles and push bars, elevator call buttons and handrails, which will be sanitized twice per day.

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, category 3 COVID-19 cleaning protocols will be followed for the spaces the individual occupied, and the unit representative will restrict access to the individual's office or workstation and notify building care.

Building care staff use EPA List N disinfectant and proper PPE (nitrile gloves, safety glasses and face coverings) to clean and disinfect the hard surfaces within the workspace, suite and facility including common touch points:

- Telephones;
- Computer keyboards;
- Mouse;
- Door handles;
- Light switches; and
- Remote controls.

Category 2 procedures (see [COVID-19 Guidance for Facilities Management Staff](#) ) will be performed in the remainder of the facility. If the space has not been occupied for seven days or more, category 2 disinfection actions by building care are not required, based on virus stability, and will not be performed.

## **MONITORING: POLICIES TO TRACK HEALTH CONDITIONS ON CAMPUS**

### **I. TESTING RESPONSIBILITY**

Cornell has established a surveillance testing program to test all students upon their arrival to Ithaca (gateway testing) and ongoing surveillance testing throughout the fall semester (for faculty, staff and students who will be on campus). The goals of this testing program are to promptly identify those individuals who are infected with COVID-19, isolate them to prevent transmission, and identify, test (diagnostic testing) and quarantine their close contacts.

Gateway testing is a requirement for students to return to campus for residential instruction. All students will be tested before traveling to the Ithaca region and/or prior to the enrolling in classes. All members of the Cornell community will be tested for the virus as soon as possible if they exhibit signs or symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals who have been authorized to work on campus will be alerted to such symptoms by answering a daily self-assessment (henceforth, “[Daily Check](#)”) that must be completed if the individual is coming to campus that day. Everyone – including students – coming to campus and accessing campus buildings for any reason is required to complete the Daily Check.

#### **a. Partnership with Cayuga Health System**

Cornell is working closely with the Cayuga Medical Center (CMC), a major healthcare provider within Cayuga Health System, and its CLIA-certified laboratory in both collection and testing for Cornell’s surveillance testing program. For *diagnostic* testing, individual samples will be acquired, prepared for analysis, and processed by CMC. Results will be collected and reported in a way that maintains confidentiality, and CMC will handle insurance billing. A partnership agreement has been executed, and cooperative surveillance testing of Cornell employees and students has been initiated.

#### **b. Cornell Health**

The Skorton Center for Health Initiatives (Cornell Health) supports the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of our student population. Cornell Health will continue to be the principal point of contact for our students around COVID-19 care, and will be the primary entity responsible for testing students for cause, including those with symptoms, those who have been in contact with others who have tested positive for COVID-19, and those identified individually as being at greater risk for community spread. Cornell Health will use its secure messaging portal to communicate with students who have been identified (e.g., through previous clinical encounters with our clinicians, or who self-disclose on their health forms that they have risk factors for poor outcomes if infected with COVID-19).

**c. *The Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC) at the College of Veterinary Medicine***

Cornell has an onsite diagnostic laboratory with experience in high-throughput PCR testing, including approved SARS-CoV-2 testing in animals. The FDA has approved surveillance screening of asymptomatic community individuals, and Cornell plans to use this pooled testing technique at the Cornell Covid-19 Testing Laboratory (“CCTL”) within the AHDC for such surveillance testing, in cooperation with CMC. Utilizing the CCTL in this manner is important in supporting Cornell’s capacity for its testing program.

**II. TESTING FREQUENCY AND PROTOCOLS**

Testing frequency and protocols include plans to test for cause (e.g., symptomatic individuals, close or proximate contacts, international travel) and for surveillance, and to proactively monitor for symptoms of influenza-like illness.

As individuals infected with SARS-CoV-2 may harbor the virus and transmit disease despite being asymptomatic, we have chosen not to rely solely on testing for cause (symptomatic or diagnostic testing) to control infection within our community. Accordingly, Cornell will use regular *surveillance* testing by PCR to identify virus carriers. Individuals so identified will be referred for *diagnostic* testing, isolated from the community if determined to be positive, and their contacts quarantined. Given information currently available, we expect the surveillance testing program will be done for all students, faculty and staff living, studying and/or working on campus.

Collaborations (shared samples) are underway with the NYS Department of Health’s Wadsworth Center to optimize surveillance parameters. The frequency of surveillance testing to minimize COVID-19 transmission will be determined based on baseline prevalence, infection trends at the start of the fall semester, and infectious disease modeling. We are planning on surveillance testing all students once per week. A research team led by Peter Frazier, Associate Professor at the School of Operations Research and Information Engineering and an expert in population modeling and simulations, has developed [COVID-19 transmission models](#) incorporating parameter estimates from current literature, CDC guidelines, and medical expertise to provide evidence-based information to guide testing decisions.

The university understands that local and national conditions will change, and this changing landscape may influence the approach to surveillance testing. The university also recognizes that scientific understanding of asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 is continuing to develop and will require that surveillance testing programs be regularly reevaluated as research into this important feature of the pandemic is reported.

**III. EARLY WARNING SIGNS**

Cornell has developed three sets of indicators – early, middle and late – to inform its approach to monitoring warning signs that positive cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

**Early stage indicators** measure behaviors (e.g., compliance with requirements for physical distancing, wearing face coverings and the use of dining facilities) that may precede viral infection, or track infections discovered quickly by asymptomatic surveillance. Behavioral surveillance is an

important tool for monitoring compliance with these directives. A standard survey instrument will be developed to observe adherence in public places (only) on campus, such as classrooms, libraries or dining facilities.

In addition, Cornell will monitor infections on a daily basis. In collaboration with TCHD, Cornell Health will receive identified information of positive students and will determine activities or practices associated with becoming COVID-19 positive. Using this information, the university will be able to correlate clusters of infections in individuals sharing residences, classrooms or other activities. This may allow for the identification of places or behaviors associated with an increase in risk of transmission and provide valuable insight on subsequent guidance that could be provided to students to reduce transmission. Similarly, Cornell will work closely with TCHD to monitor infections in faculty and staff.

**Middle stage indicators** rely heavily on the concept of “syndromic surveillance,” where COVID-19-like symptoms (such as dry cough, fever or difficulty breathing) are measured as a proxy of COVID-19 infection. Syndromic surveillance has been conducted in the United States, usually through hospital emergency departments, for about 20 years. In many locations it is the first indicator of influenza in a community, displaying its utility as an early warning system. An important caveat is that symptoms for other clinical entities overlap with COVID-19-like symptoms, so a “signal” in COVID-19 syndromic surveillance does not necessarily indicate a COVID-19 problem and may require further investigation.

The syndromic surveillance systems that are middle stage indicators include the online “Daily Check” that all Cornell community members living on campus or coming to campus will be required to complete every morning. Cornell Health will also track the number of students with these symptoms through its call line and clinic and the TCHD is organizing a syndromic surveillance system among outpatient providers in Tompkins County. We hope to be able to access this information to better understand community transmission. Finally, CMC collects data on all patients presenting to their emergency department and can categorize it by International Code of Diseases (ICD). We are negotiating with CMC to share this data as well.

**Late stage indicators** are those that signify a severe COVID-19 situation in Tompkins County. Regardless of the reasons for higher transmission, late stage indicators signal a threat to the health and safety of the Cornell community (except, perhaps, for an isolated outbreak) and greater Ithaca area community. It is possible that all of these indicators may “signal” rapidly and indicate the need for the most severe interventions to control the outbreak. The indicators include the total number of cases reported in Tompkins County, nursing home outbreaks, and capacity of regular and intensive care beds at Cayuga Medical Center.

#### IV. TRACING

The Tompkins County Health Department has primary authority under state law to conduct contact tracing. Results of diagnostic testing will be communicated to TCHD by the medical facility providing the test and all individuals identified as having COVID-19 (the “index case”) will be isolated. The index case will also be interviewed by TCHD to identify others with whom they have had close contact, including:

- Individuals who share close living arrangements with the index case; and
- Individuals who have been within six feet of the index case for more than 10 minutes during the 48 hours before the onset of the index case’s symptoms, or 48 hours prior to testing (in the case of asymptomatic presentation).

All such contacts identified by TCHD will be tested for COVID-19 infection at the first opportunity. TCHD or other local health department, depending on county of residence of any close contact, will also require quarantine of close contacts whenever possible (see “Isolation and Quarantine” below).

In addition, Cornell Health may recommend additional testing of students based on interviews with the index case to ensure that additional contacts who may have become infected are not missed.

## V. SCREENING

Daily health screening of employees, via the [Daily Check](#), is in use. Students, as they return to the Ithaca region, will also use the Daily Check, which is monitored to understand density on campus as well, compliance with Cornell’s procedures for returning to campus, and understanding the overall health and welfare of the Cornell community.

Cornell has created this online tool to help all members of our community consider the risk factors for infection with COVID-19. This screening system will send daily reminders to those who have been approved to work or conduct research on campus to complete their brief health assessment each day prior to arriving on campus or at a Cornell facility. Completion of the questionnaire will result in the respondent being instructed that they can begin their day at Cornell using standard COVID-19-related precautions, or, instead, that they may be required to seek advice and perhaps undergo COVID-19 testing and/or conduct work or study remotely before returning to campus activities.

In addition to these daily self-assessments, the surveillance testing we are planning is expected to detect asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 before they would otherwise have been identified. Isolating these positives and their contacts is designed to further protect the Cornell campus and the greater Ithaca community.

## CONTAINMENT OF POTENTIAL TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS

### I. ISOLATION

To the degree possible, Cornell will contract with area hotels for isolation space rather than set aside on-campus housing for our residential students, given that our need for isolation and quarantine space will not be fixed over the course of the academic year. Off-campus isolation also allows for more separation of infected and potentially infected individuals from other students on campus.

## II. QUARANTINE

Faculty, staff and students residing off campus will be asked to quarantine at home. For students who are unable to quarantine in their residences, Cornell plans to make arrangements with area hotels and other property owners for living quarters.

## III. STUDENTS CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED TO HAVE COVID-19

Isolated students will reside in hotels, apartments, dorm rooms, or at home throughout the duration of their isolation. To support capacity for isolation, Cornell has 1,200 hotel rooms reserved in Tompkins County for various blocks of time. In addition, Cornell will provide food, medicine, mental health, academic and/or other support, as needed. Students arriving in Ithaca and planning to live on campus and who are awaiting test results for the first time under our gateway testing protocol will be provided temporary living quarters before moving into their room.

Protocols approved by TCHD are in place for students in quarantine or isolation to walk to the on-campus testing site for COVID-19 testing. To safely transport persons who are ill and/or are suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19, Cornell's Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) has developed transport and post-transport disinfection procedures for Cornell's shuttle service, CULift. Procedures include PPE, face covering, distancing and vehicle disinfection requirements. CULift drivers are to be trained on the procedures prior to transporting any ill person and are to instruct passengers of the requirements upon pickup.

## IV. HYGIENE, CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

As noted in greater details above, the university has established three cleaning categories: category 1 (standard cleaning procedures) is the pre-COVID-19 cleaning process; category 2 (elevated disinfection protocol) is an enhanced cleaning methodology that targets high-touch areas to reduce fomite spread of COVID19; and category 3 (deep cleaning protocol) is a targeted cleaning process triggered when a building occupant tests positive for COVID-19.

## V. COMMUNICATION

At all pandemic stages, Cornell students, staff and faculty will utilize a variety of non-pharmaceutical interventions involving communications and education. Over 30 unique posters have been created for specific locations and audiences in print and digital formats and are [publicly available on the university's COVID-19 website](#). Key messages include:

- Physical distancing of at least six feet.
- Avoiding large gatherings, especially when physical distancing is difficult.
- Requiring everyone on the Cornell campus to have a face covering around the neck at all times and using it to cover mouth and nose while in any building or within 6 feet of anyone outside.

Faculty, staff and students may remove the mask inside a building only if inside their residence alone or with the other occupant of that room, or in their personal office or cubicle alone.

- Wearing face coverings (e.g., cloth mask, face shield) when interacting with other individuals in class.
- Staying away from others and not attending classes or coming to work when ill.
- Frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or hand sanitizers.
- Frequent cleaning and/or disinfection of high-touch surfaces (doorknobs, handrails, phones, shared desk surfaces, etc.).
- Required daily check-in to have access to campus.

The university maintains a [COVID-19 website](#) that provides information related to the disease, policies, procedures, resources and communications. Additional communication channels, such as email and social media, are used for selective communication. The university is also planning a robust public health and social norming campaign designed to reinforce messages around prevention. This campaign will use all available communications platforms (email, web, social, peer-to-peer, and paid and earned media) to ensure that individuals in the Cornell – and greater Ithaca area – community understand our shared responsibility to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Finally, the university is engaged with members of both the Cornell and greater Ithaca community through online forums for stakeholders to learn about the university’s plans. This engagement will continue as the university progresses through its reactivation plans and throughout the fall semester. Among these engagements are:

- Multiple student town halls, including a Greek Life facilities and planning meeting for chapter presidents and advisors, an international student forum on July 9, a graduate student forum on July 22 and multiple all-student and parent forums.
- Cornell’s Student and Employee Assemblies are conducting regular, online meetings joined by the university’s administration to answer staff questions.
- Cornell’s Provost hosts regular faculty town halls to address faculty questions and concerns.
- Cornell’s Office of Community Relations is organizing comprehensive community forums in addition to smaller, neighborhood level community forums.
- Cornell leadership regularly engages Tompkins county political, business and community leaders to keep them informed of the university’s reactivation plans.
- Representatives from the area’s three institutions of higher education (Cornell, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College) meet regularly to coordinate their respective reactivation activities.

## **SHUTDOWN OF IN-PERSON OPERATIONS OF THE CAMPUS, IF NECESSITATED BY WIDESPREAD COVID-19 TRANSMISSION**

### **I. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY**

#### ***a. Research***

At heightened alert levels, Cornell will modify research activities. Modifications will begin with reduced lab capacity and reduction of human-subjects research. Research activities may be reduced to health-related and essential research, such as agricultural, health, defense and COVID-

19-related research. Continued research during high alerts will be subject to approval by college deans and department chairs.

If alert levels continue to worsen, research will be reduced to essential research only, e.g., COVID-19-related research, and DOD and DOE research. Additionally, maintenance operations that care for animals and plants, preservation of critical and unique resources (e.g., cell lines), and equipment that cannot be shut down without significant consequences to research will remain operational.

***b. Academic***

To the extent possible, Cornell will continue to provide a hybrid instruction model that includes a mix of in-person classes and online options. If reducing numbers of students in classes is imperative, Cornell will continue to restrict class sizes, may create additional course sections, and extend the teaching day to accommodate physical distancing. Laboratory classes where students normally learn in a close environment or in teams will be restricted to maintain physical distancing. Faculty will be encouraged to record lectures and provide notes remotely or provide live instruction virtually as necessary.

As alert levels increase, all classes may move to virtual only. Laboratory classes that are required for course completion or professional degree requirements will move to remote-only after approval by the respective college dean.

***c. Dining***

Services will be adjusted based on population density of campus, and scope and complexity of operations will be included in phase-down procedures. As alert levels increase, capacity will reduce (25%-50%) to maintain physical distancing. Additional measures may include:

- Limited menu options;
- Use of all disposable service ware in all settings;
- Incorporation of assigned seating via a reservation system, and/or a grab-and-go option with no seating;
- Use of contactless ordering and payment solutions; and
- Changes in the number and hours of operations for the various dining halls and retail operations.

***d. Health services***

Cornell's [student health services](#) will operate a hybrid approach of telehealth and in-person visits to accommodate the medical and mental health needs of the student population. Additionally, health services will maintain testing capacity to monitor disease incidence among students. As health-related data indicate increasing negative outcomes, operations will convert to a predominantly telehealth model, with in-person visits only for emergency or COVID-19-related issues.

***e. Libraries***

Materials may be delivered via digital media and only instructors and researchers will have access to in-person resources. Student access will be highly restricted if alert levels rise. Curbside pickup and return of resources will be implemented and increased cleaning protocols will be incorporated for removed and returned resources. As health alerts rise, in-person access will be

suspended, digital delivery of resources will increase, and curbside services will be further restricted or eliminated.

***f. Nonacademic operations***

Individuals and operations that can function remotely will continue remotely. Individuals are restricted to come to campus on an as-needed basis. Meetings will take place virtually or in spaces that can maintain physical distancing. As alert levels rise, meetings will move to remote only. Office capacity will be reduced as negative warning trends continue to the point when all in-person office work will be suspended. Eventually, only essential operations (e.g., utilities, emergency services, dining, residential life and essential research) will be allowed to continue onsite.

***g. Social gatherings and campus events***

In-person concerts and lectures that involve outside guests are suspended. As health alert levels rise, on-campus social events will align with state guidelines for size of gatherings. Extracurricular activities will be constrained to adhere to physical distancing measures or suspended entirely (and/or moved to a fully virtual platform) depending on the status of health outcomes indicated on the dashboard.

***h. Travel***

Increased prevalence of COVID-19 will impact the safety and feasibility of international and domestic travel. Further restrictions will be implemented and refined as pandemic impacts change:

- All university travel will be registered in Cornell's travel registry during high alerts.
- All non-essential university-sponsored travel will be restricted during high alerts.
- Graduate students, staff and faculty must petition to travel during high alerts.
- Travel to and from areas with high COVID-19 cases is strongly discouraged and will continue to be for undetermined time.

**II. MOVE-OUT**

In the event of a shutdown during a semester in progress, Cornell's Housing and Residential Life is prepared to move students out of residential communities in a safe and orderly manner:

- A detailed communication plan will be prepared in advance and approved.
- Affected personnel will be given a minimum of one day's notice prior to an unplanned shut down.
- Terms and conditions for an unplanned move out are included in student housing contracts.
- Students will be notified of the need to depart on-campus housing and by what date and time.
- Students will be required to sign up for a move-out time and day by building. Floor timeslots will be staggered to allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- No visitors or family members will be permitted to enter the building.
- Elevators and stairwells will be monitored.
- Shipping and storage options will be made available for students' personal belongings. Storage vendors are on standby. Supplies are on hand and readily available for use.

- As with the move-out in spring 2020, students who are unable to travel or have an approved reason may stay in on-campus housing. Arrangements will be made for them to move into designated residential buildings that allow for appropriate distancing in hallways and bathrooms.
- Graduate students who live in the Hasbrouck community (our only on-campus residence for graduate students) will be permitted to stay.
- All graduate and undergraduate students who choose to stay in on-campus housing will be required to attest and affirm special housing and dining terms and conditions for COVID-19 special circumstances. To expedite this process, we will ask all students on Day One of Move-in to provide guidance on the probability of them needing to remain on campus after a shutdown.
- Students who remain in on-campus housing will have access to adequate food and other, though limited, services for life/safety considerations.

As noted above, a limited number of students (those who cannot travel home or those without a home conducive to learning) may petition to remain on campus after all students are asked to leave campus residences. All other students will leave campus. All students will receive remaining coursework for the semester online. Cornell will follow NYS guidance with respect to campus operations that may be permitted after student move out.

### **III. COMMUNICATION**

The campus community, including students and parents, will receive regular updates on disease prevalence at Cornell. Public data will also be made available by TCHD and communications between the TCHD, Cayuga Medical Center and Cornell will continue to be critical during high alerts and move-out.

Communication among the higher education institutions in Tompkins County will be important during high alerts and leading up to a move-out to coordinate the departures of students from Ithaca and Tompkins County, as well as other actions.

In the event of scaling back campus operations or the need to reduce density on the campus, Cornell leadership will notify campus personnel and students via email.