

# Fall Planning Update Webinar: New Students & Families Transcript

**Katharine Pei:** Hello everyone. My name is Katharine Pei and I want to welcome you to our discussion about updating the fall calendar. I am the Director of the First Year Center and tonight I am joined by my colleagues and senior leadership from the Division of Student Affairs and the College of Arts and Sciences. And my colleagues will introduce themselves shortly. We are very excited that you've chosen to join us for tonight's conversation. But a little bit of information before we get started. First is my weather warning. We have a bit of a thunderstorm here in St Louis so if you hear a large banging sound, it's probably thunder and not my toddler, although maybe also the toddler. If we cut out a little bit or one of us just disappears, there are I think plenty of my colleagues on this call to be able to continue moving forward, but hopefully, we will have a good Wifi connection for the next hour with you all.

And now I want to make sure that you know how to submit questions during this webinar. If you are logged in via Zoom you will notice that we've given you the ability to ask questions via the Q and A feature. If you are watching this live stream through Youtube, I invite you to email your questions to [families.wustl.edu](mailto:families.wustl.edu), I sorry, [families@wustl.edu](mailto:families@wustl.edu). The dot there would take you to a website. So you can email your questions to [families@wustl.edu](mailto:families@wustl.edu) and one of my colleagues will put that information up on the screen, I think, in a minute for you as well. And then I wanted you to know, you're going to probably see a lot of shields on the screen with people that either say first-year center or student affairs. Those folks are on the backend of this helping us to cull through those questions, and so if you are in the Q and A feature again, you might see someone click dismiss on your question. We're going to answer that question on here. We're just moving them into a different screen that I'm reading from because it's a little hard for us as panelists to keep track of what's happening in that Q and A box. If you did submit your questions in advance by emailing them to either the [families@wustl.edu](mailto:families@wustl.edu) account or to the First Year Center, please rest assured that we already have those questions and are prepared to answer them on this webinar. We have received over a hundred pre-submitted questions. We're going to do our best to answer as many of those and the ones that come live in the next hour, but we may not be able to get to them all, unfortunately, and so if you have a more nuanced or personal question we will email you the response to that next week. For the rest, we will do our best to update the FAQ on the university's covered website quickly so that you can get those answers that I know are really important to you. So to make sure that the folks on Zoom know how to use that Q and A feature - I'm seeing a few people are already started in there - I'm going to ask that for people to test that functionality if you can just write in where you are watching this from, let us know where in the world you are, and we'll name a couple of those places on air.

And then, lastly, this webinar is being recorded and so next week we will upload this webinar to the [families.wustl.edu](http://families.wustl.edu) website and you'll be able to view it there or maybe share with someone who wasn't able to join us live. So before I pass this along to our panelists, I want to share some of the places you all are joining us from. We have new students and families from Maryland, Maine, and California, so all across the United States. And now since I know you really want to hear from my colleagues I'm going to ask each of them to introduce themselves beginning with Miss Kawanna Leggett and then once those introductions are complete, Doctor Robert Wild and Dean Jen Smith will share some reflections on Chancellor Martin's announcement regarding the fall semester. So we'll begin with Kawanna.

**Kawanna Leggett:** Good evening everyone. My name is Kawanna Leggett and I'm currently the Executive Director for Residential Life, and on Monday I will assume the role of Interim Dean of Students. The Dean

of Students' portfolio includes working with amazing folks in the First Year Center, Campus Life, Student Conduct, and Residential Life.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Dr. Kirk Dougher.

**Kirk Dougher:** Hello everyone. Thanks for joining us this evening. My name is Kirk Dougher. I am the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Support and Wellbeing. I oversee a number of areas including Habif Medical, our pharmacy, our health promotion office, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention, Habif Mental Health, and also an entity we call WashU Cares.

**Katharine Pei:** Dr. Robert Wild.

**Rob Wild:** Hello, everybody and welcome to the Washington University family. Some of you may have been met me already on some of our other new family webinars. It's good to have you with us again. Rob Wild, current Dean of Students. I passed the baton over to Kawanna Leggett next Monday and I will become the Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs which basically means I'm working with a large number of departments and programs and people who will be serving your students in their lives outside of the classroom.

**Katharine Pei:** And Dean Jen Smith.

**Jen smith:** Hi, Jen Smith. I'm the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and I'm here on behalf of my colleagues in the undergraduate academic divisions.

**Katharine Pei:** Rob and Jen. Would you begin by sharing some reflections on Chancellor Martin's announcement regarding the fall semester?

**Rob Wild:** I would be happy to start and then I will pass things over to Dean Smith. So obviously in the last 24 hours, a lot has changed and we are very excited that we are able to announce not just our fall calendar, but our 2021 academic calendar for next year. As we have been saying all along, our goal as an institution has always been to figure out how this fall we can have a robust in-person experience for our students, both you as our new students and families, as well as our returning students. This is hard work for all of us, for all of you in your lives, none of us have ever experienced anything like this what we're experiencing right now and the challenge is, as you all know because you are reading the same news outlets and same CDC guidance that we are, that there is no clear or obvious path to figuring out how to do what we do in the same as we prepare for the fall. We have been working really since March to begin to figure out how we can re-open our campus in the fall. Dean Smith and I have been participating in a group that I'll give you a little bit of inside information on later or in a minute or so that we call affectionately the Fall Contingency Planning Committee. Don't remember that because it's a mouthful. But really, it's a group of senior leaders at the university who have been quickly and efficiently working to try to look at multiple scenarios for the re-opening of campus and the possibilities as well as the associated risks with that. Our senior leadership team has been guided by many of our academic leaders, our own operations teams, as well our very world-class faculty in the areas of public health and infectious disease. It's been one of the silver linings to this process is to have the chance with some of those outstanding folks from our medical school and our institute for public health. And as I said, I can tell you there's no clear path or obvious path forward for how to do this. You all have entrusted us with the care of your students. We take that very seriously. And so, that's why we have developed the plans that we have developed. As you learned yesterday, we have decided that our plan at Washington University is to take a very cautious and deliberate approach to re-opening our campus. In March, we closed our campus very quickly, our plan now is to re-open slowly, carefully, thoughtfully and that is what we are doing. We believe this plan gives us the best chance for success in the year ahead and will provide the best experience for all of your students. I'm going to

mention a little bit about our planning process over the next month that we will be sharing more information about as it becomes available. But I wanted to talk about three specific areas that all of you are likely interested in. And one of the themes unfortunately for us tonight is that I can't answer exactly every question that you will have. I would like to but I can't. But I'm going to mention a couple of things. First, I'm going to start with orientation. We have an outstanding orientation team here at Washington University. Katharine Pei, whom you've heard from, is the leader of those programs, and she is leading us through this unique orientation season. We are going to be having an orientation program - it's called Bear Beginnings - here at Washington University. It is going to be a mix of virtual experiences for your students and for you that will begin this summer. And it will culminate with in-person experiences that will happen for your students in the three or four days leading up to the start of classes on September 14th. I cannot tell you the move-in date. I would not make plans the week of September 7th, because that is when it is going to be, it is likely, although not decided yet, that we're going to do a staggered move-in to make it safer. So that we don't have everybody come in the same three to six-hour window, but that we spread it out over a few days. We will be sharing more information about that soon. We are working on our housing assignments. Kawanna will be talking about that, likely, on this call. But we will finalize our housing assignments by August 1st this year. So that students have plenty of time to meet their new roommates before they arrive.

And then the last thing I wanted to mention before I talk about fall planning is for our international families. We know we need to provide some dates so that we can begin completing the I-20 paper work and get your travel underway. We are working very quickly now that we know the September 14th date. And we expect to be able to have that process underway by the end of next week if not sooner than that. So stay tuned. If you haven't already connected with our Office of International Students and Scholars, that's the team that's going to be working closely with you as our international families. Okay. So talking about our planning for the fall, we are, over the next four weeks, going to be deeply engaged in the next very intense planning process for the Fall. We've centered our planning around four areas. I'm going to quickly talk about three and let Dean Smith talk about the fourth. The first planning area is around housing and dining. This is in some ways the most challenging and most important part of our planning process for the Fall. How do we create living environments for our students where we are minimizing the spread of Coronavirus? As I've said in other audiences, it is not a matter of if we will have a Coronavirus situation on our campus, it's a matter of when. We want to be as prepared as we can be for that. How students are fed. Just like how you all are experiencing your trips to the grocery store and the trips to get take out, we are having to modify our own dining service here to be able to serve the great food that we have become known for to all of our students, our faculty, and our staff. And those plans already are pretty far along, and we will be finalizing them in the next three to four weeks. So housing and dining is the first group. The second group that Dr. Dougher may speak about on this call is around monitoring and containment. We will need to be ready with adequate testing for students, faculty, and staff as well as the ability for students to provide quarantine housing, and in some cases isolation housing, in the event that students contract coronavirus. And so that group is working already and will continue to work. And then the third group that I'll mention is around Danforth campus programs and events. We have lots of activities and student groups that we expect to be back in action this fall. Life will be different. Our ability to gather as freely in groups of large sizes is something that happens at all campuses, whether it's at a sporting event or a theatre production, will be different but we know if we're going to have a residential experience we want our student groups to be able to engage with one another. And so basically what we're doing is we're planning on some ground rules for how that will work and we're engaging in this particular group with many of our returning students. In fact, they've already been talking with us and I'm proud of them because in some ways our students are steps ahead of us in terms of their thinking about how they can still have the activities that they love and do it in a way that is safe. So the most important I think of these four

groups is the academic programs group that Dean Smith has already been working with and so I want to let her have a little airtime to talk about that.

**Jen Smith:** Thanks so much, Rob. So yes, we have another working group for fall planning recently renamed Educational Mission because it focuses on how we deliver the world-class personal and engaging educational experience that we're incredibly proud of. So that group is working across a number of areas and one of those is applying the same public health guidelines to keep our students and our faculty and our staff, our whole community, safe to our classes and so adjusting the capacity in our classrooms. Thinking about extending the passing time between our classes so that students don't have to crowd to get into or out of some of the classrooms. How will we offer our lab classes in the appropriately socially distanced way? So some of it is very operations focused and looking at how we're using space and scheduling classes. So that's similar. And then more particular academic engagement. So we're looking a lot at how we are supporting and training and providing guidelines for our faculty to redesign their classes for the fall so that they will allow for students to participate both in-person and remotely so that we have a lot of flexibility in how we're offering our classes so that if there are students who can't make it to St. Louis, or are immunocompromised, that they will have an alternative to in-person engagement and that will be remote. And so designing a course that works well simultaneously with students in the classroom and students participating from wherever they are requires technology and it requires expertise and so we're spending a lot of time this summer taking some of what we learned from our less-planned pivot to remote instruction in the spring but using that to create better and consistent experiences for our students over the course of the fall semester. So a big focus of that group is faculty support and training over the course of the summer and then we're also looking at technology, both within our classrooms, to permit that remote engagement for our students because what we love so much, what we as faculty love so much, about teaching is that interaction with our students and their interaction with their peers in the classroom. And so a huge focus for us is how to support that kind of interactive experience, regardless of where students are connecting to their class from, be it in person on campus or remotely. And so building that all now and making sure all the technology is there both in our classrooms and for our individual students, so that our students all have the technology they need to participate fully in these experiences, will allow us to be immensely flexible over the course of the fall semester. If a student does have to be in quarantine or isolated for some time, they can switch over to the remote engagement form of the classes that they're in. So we're putting a lot of thought and effort into designing our curriculum for the fall to allow for students to participate in a way that is healthiest and really works best for them. And then we have a whole group really thinking about, "What are the opportunities presented?" This is an incredible unprecedented time in world history. And so how are we making sure that our students have the opportunity to engage? We have some new classes. Our anthropology department is teaching on the anthropology of COVID-19. Or life in crisis, how do societies respond to major crises? How are we creating and maximizing the educational opportunities that such a historic time presents? And using the remote possibilities to have more people coming in and participating and giving guest lectures. So how are we not just delivering the educational experience we're known for, but making sure that we are rising to the opportunity of this time to make our educational experience even better.

So I know one piece of the academic calendar that has caused people a lot of questions, is around our final exams. Which at this point, given the September 14th start date, we have a set number of weeks in a semester for our accreditation. That sets number of hours per week, credit hours per week over a number of weeks per semester. That we need to deliver a degree that meets all the criteria for our accreditation as a university. And so with the September 14th start date, we need 15 weeks of instruction and that kicks our final week of the semester, which is our final exam period, to be after January 1st. And so a couple of pieces of that-- not all of our classes hold final exams during final exam periods. Some have projects or papers. Some simply offer multiple midterm exams on different sections of the class. And so that exam

may be in the last week of classes. And so not every course will have something during that final exam period. We are also planning for whatever happens during that final exam period after January 1st to happen remotely. So students will be able to when they're done with classes, go home. I believe December 18th is the last scheduled day of instruction. And they will be able to participate remotely in final exams, and then until classes will start up on January 25th for the spring semester. So students will be able to have more than a month while they're not on campus participating just in those final exams.

So this is a little bit new for us to have final exams after break, but it's not by any means something that never happens anywhere. When I was an undergrad, all my final exams happened after winter break. And so I understand completely the downsides of that, because it's in the back of your mind over break. But I promise you more often than that it's that you haul all over your textbooks with you and you don't actually open them until a couple of days before final exam periods. Not that I would advocate that process but that's often what happens. And it's okay. Don't stress out about it. It's it gives us a way even just to take a breath, regroup, rethink, and a lot of the work that you've done over the semester will settle into your brain while you're not thinking about it, for real. There's cognitive science behind that. I'm not making that up. And you'll be in good shape for those exams in whatever classes are actually holding final exams during that final exam period. So again, I know that's a piece that is causing some stress for people, but I want to reassure you the academic support will be there for you and we're ready to work with you, and we're just so excited for students to be on campus. We have missed you all so much. Well not you necessarily. We're excited for you to join us. We want our students back and we're incredibly excited for that to happen and willing to do whatever we need to do to make that happen safely so that we can keep you with us on campus.

**Katharine Pei:** Rob and Jen, thank you so much for that. In the past week or so, we've seen several universities across the United States announce their Fall plans, and many of them are starting earlier in August than maybe their typical semester would. They're ending by Thanksgiving. WashU is obviously taking a different route. Rob, maybe you specifically, can you talk about the decision to start the semester later than usual and bring back students after Thanksgiving?

**Rob Wild:** Yep. We have gotten a few questions about that and I again want to highlight what I said earlier. Our strategy has been careful and deliberate and what that means is, we want to gradually reopen. For us, almost all of our faculty and staff have been off-campus since March. You can see, I'm sitting here in my basement at my house. I've been to campus two times since March. And effectively students, or faculty and staff, won't be returning to campus until August at this point. We've cancelled all summer programs on campus through August 1st, and so our gradual reopening will begin in August in earnest, as we begin to repopulate some of our offices and labs and spaces on campus. We made the decision to allow two groups of professional students, our law students, and our social work students, and public health students in the Brown School of Social Work, to return on August 24th for classes as scheduled. Part of the reason for that is that they are not living on campus, so we don't have to manage the challenge that the residence halls present. But part of the reason honestly is that we want to ease into instruction and see what we can learn from that first group so that we can be better when the large number of undergraduates return to campus, on September 14th. There is, as I said earlier too, there is no clear path. The models nationally, regionally, for where a second peak will occur are all over the place. In St. Louis, for example, one model shows a resurgence in St. Louis in late July and early August, related to the timing of when the state of Missouri began to reopen and I promised I wouldn't do this, but I have to comment on the Ozarks party that happened over the weekend, that made its way all over the national news media, which is about 120 miles away from St. Louis. But still distressing to all of us in St. Louis who have been staying home and doing our best to try to be safe so that we can open our businesses and our higher education institutions. So all this to say, we believe that extra time will allow us to be safer, stronger, better. We know that this is the right

decision for us because we believe it gives us the last chance for success. Our goal is to have an in-person experience for all of those 15 weeks that Jen mentioned, and we're going to continue to try to work towards that.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you, Rob. I'm seeing lots of questions about orientation and when students need to move-in, so I'm going to break my rule as the moderator and answer the questions about orientation since they fall under my department. So as Rob mentioned, we are reenvisioning what orientation looks like at WashU, so typically our Bear Beginnings is in-person in August. We will continue to have an orientation program called Bear Beginnings, but it's going to be three phases and one actually starts next week. So for all the new students who are in Wisr, you can go in there right now and look up about Bear Beginnings' summer engagement series. It's a several offerings of some Zoom meetings and webinars and discussion boards to join students in a community that you're affiliated with. So there are spaces for students of color. There are spaces for students who practice certain religious and spiritual space. There are spaces for students in some of our name scholar programs like Ervin, Rodriguez, Danforth, Langsdorf, CMML. There's a space for our students who are in our DENEb stars program. And so we're starting that actually next week. Then at the beginning of August, we're going to launch Bear Beginnings: Get your Bearings, (if you can't tell we really like bear puns), and for Get your Bearings it is going to be an online orientation where you're going to learn some of the information we typically do in person in Bear Beginnings but that often for us was in lecture hall or a large venue with 600 people. Jen Smith for example, would normally give a little curriculum lecture to groups of 600 Arts & Sciences students at the same time. We don't think that's going to be a good plan in September. And so we're going to put that information in the Get your Bearings that's happening in August. And then Bear Beginnings Fall Welcome will be our in-person experience in September.

And so the in-person experience will be in September. I know that there was originally a move-in date for August, that is no longer the case. I'm going to make sure that the new students' website is updated hopefully tomorrow to indicate that. So my first real question for one of the panelists is for you Kawanna, could you share a little bit more about when families and students can learn more about move-in and what are some of the considerations that we're looking at this year for move-in, and how it's going to differ than in the past in order to ensure that it's a safe experience for everyone?

**Kawanna Leggett:** Yes. I think the biggest consideration is really looking at what our public health guidelines will be. Now that we have our September 14th date, we really have the opportunity to back in and build what our move-in experience will be. As Rob indicated earlier, we're looking at a staggered move-in that practices great social distancing, and it's also dependent on what our occupancy looks like. And so these conversations go hand in hand. We have many fall planning contingency groups coming together to talk about what the density of our housing portfolio will look like. And so as we think through those things, we're also looking at what move-in will look like. What I can guarantee is that we will ensure that public health takes precedence over everything in terms of how we bring our students back into the residential facilities. I will also echo what Rob said, so September 7th, that week is looking more and more like the opportunity for us to have our students return. We will have guidelines in place and so as we think about the move-in experience, it may not look as it has in the past where we have a group of student leaders who emerge to your car to help you move in. You've got to think about what those guidelines will look like, but we will make sure that it's a positive move-in experience once we get those dates together. And just to give you a little bit of assurance that we're planning in a timely manner. We have meetings scheduled tomorrow and next week with our doctors who are going to advise us when those best dates are. We're trying to get our dates together because as Rob indicated, we have international students who need to have clear guidelines of when they can come back. So I'm hopeful in the next couple weeks we'll have more clear, definitive dates around when move-in will be.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you so much, Kawanna. Kirk, I have a very specific question for you but that we've seen many, many times. Do we think that students will need to self-quarantine for their first 14 days after they return to campus in the fall in September? Or if they were to travel later in the semester maybe around Thanksgiving, what might that process look like?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah. Thank you. So for the quarantining piece, it's not anticipated at this point that students are going to need to self-quarantine upon arrival. So right now, what is called community transmission, where it's like when you get a cold, you sometimes have some idea where you got it from. Other times, not so much. When that starts to happen with regard to viruses, it often eliminates the need to try and figure out where people are coming from. However, if there were a huge second wave located in a particular city, then there might be some additional complications that come out of that. But until we have something identified like that right now, it's not seen as a viable option to be able to have students quarantine as they come to campus. However, additionally, we're also looking at different options on how we might be able to make sure that we're screening students appropriately, helping them to be able to make sure that they understand clear practices. It is very likely, in fact, almost predetermined that we will have a number of different stipulations, as Kawanna indicated, that students be wearing masks while they're on campus, that they socially distance. All the same kinds of things that you would recognize from your state and local county health recommendations. As we look to the guidance that have been stood up in a number of documents from the American College Health Association and the CDC specifically around campus situations, what we're seeing is very consistent recommendations on how we're able to do that.

So while we don't anticipate quarantining, we're in hope that we might be able to have some testing processes put in place that would allow us to be able to make sure that we are testing our students who become symptomatic and that we are looking at other options. So over the course of the last few days, we've noted that what we were very hopeful about with regard to serology tests that look at the antibodies present in somebody that may indicate that they've already had it, we're seeing some false positives and false negatives coming out of that. And also, the scope of what those tests look like is too broad. And so essentially, what we'd hope to be able to do with students is run them through some of those tests to be able to figure out how we create the social distancing policy and public health policies, but that's not currently a feasible option. One of the other advantages, to speak to what Dr. Wild mentioned, is that as these scientific innovations and public health policies become more clear with time, starting in September gives us the opportunity, in fact, the greatest opportunity to be able to have those things be as clear as possible before we bring students back on campus.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Jen, a question for you. Now the semester is being pushed back, many of our incoming students maybe were going to do something this summer like travel or work at a summer camp or have an internship, do shadowing for someone to learn about a potential career. A lot of those opportunities have dissolved in COVID. So since the semester's not starting till September now, what academic opportunities do we offer at Wash U over the summer that a student might be able to engage in?

**Jen Smith:** So we do have-- we're running summer classes, and a lot of those are the foundational classes that you could take to explore different areas or get a start. So there's certainly the opportunity to get a taste of what WashU classes are like. And those are being offered for the summer in a fully remote manner because we're still working from home. And so, we have a program specifically for our incoming first-year students called Summer Start that does include some community building, getting to know each other. That would be an awesome way to make connections, not just take classes, but starting to meet some other students. And another piece of what-- since we now have a little bit of extra time-- so our summer classes normally would have ended August 15th in time for there to be another week before our fall classes started, but now we've got a couple weeks. So part of what-- our group that is charged with innovation and

creating new educational opportunities, we've asked them to think about those couple of weeks towards the end of August and early September. To think about some mechanisms for students to engage in exploration, in connection, intellectually that we're in the process of designing and standing up. So stay tuned. There will be additional opportunities to get connected with our faculty, with other WashU students. That'll show up later on in the summer.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks, Jen. Kirk, another question for you. There's a lot of recommendations about people wearing face coverings, using hand sanitizer. Does the university have a plan in place to obtain sufficient complete-- let me start over. Obtain sufficient cleaning supplies and PPE given that it's a little hard for some of us to find those in our grocery store, Walmart, Target?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah. Great question. So we are working hand-in-hand with the wonderful and quite world renowned WashU School of Medicine. And in conjunction with them and our Emergency Management Team, we've got great resources to be able to tap into for procurement, specifically for PPE. So some of the concerns that we've had historically about obtaining PPE have reduced in their significance and we've been able to develop several better pipelines to be able to acquire that. So at this point, from our Emergency Management folks and from our School of Medicine, we're not hearing the concern about be able to obtain enough hand sanitizer and masks and other kinds of things. Some of the more medically orientated PPE is still a little bit more difficult to come by, but they're finding resources to be able to acquire that as well. So with the nice response from St. Louis and having the curve be flattened, some of those resources and store houses haven't been as depleted as we had anticipated they might be. Which, again, bodes well for the opportunity to continue to plan for students return.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Kawanna, a lot of families look forward to, in their first year, coming to campus for Parent & Family Weekend. Can you share a little bit about what our plans are around Parent & Family Weekend?

**Kawanna Leggett:** Certainly. One of the best parts of WashU is our involvement with partnering with our parents and making them feel like they are part of the community. And so, know that while we will need to re-imagine Parent & Family Weekend and may not have the traditional experience that we've always had as we are looking at potentially-- looking at what the future looks like, I can say right now, we probably won't have Parent & Family Weekend as it's set up. We are working on building a robust virtual experience for our Parent & Family Weekend. Katharine, on our team, will continue to they do amazing job even it won't be onsite.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Rob, can you share a little bit about what the plan is for this spring 2021 semester and those calendar dates?

**Rob Wild:** Yep, great question. This was not as prominent in the announcement yesterday. But the spring dates are basically slightly shifted back. We are having a spring break in the spring, but the start date is January 25th, Monday. And we will end the second week of May. Again, so much is going to change between now and spring about what we know about public health recommendations and all the various changes that will happen in our own community and around the country. But for now, our faculty, our team in student affairs, university is planning the full academic year with a slightly longer extended winter break period.

**Katharine Pei:** And Jen, how will that January 25th start date for the second semester align or space out from the finals that are happening to wrap up the end of the first semester?

**Jen Smith:** There should be about two weeks. The finals should end around January 8th, Friday, January 8th, and then two full weeks, plus weekends, before classes get going on Monday, the 25th.

**Katharine Pei:** Rob or Kawanna, for either of you, we know that the academic experience is why people come to WashU, right, to get their degree first. But there's also really important co-curricular experience that aligns with that, right, being able to have a student work job, doing research in a lab, studying abroad someday hopefully, participating in some of our great student organizations maybe like a cappella group, or one of our intramural sports, or a fraternity or sorority. What is that looking like our co-curricular experience as we think about this all?

**Kawanna Leggett:** I'll let Rob take that question, but I will say our current students have been actively engaged since they left campus. We've met many of our student groups who are actively looking at how they can continue to come back and build wonderful experiences. So know that, while the students went home, they continued to gather, congregate, and really communicate "what does WashU look like for the future?" So I'm excited about the student leaders that are coming back, the amazing student union representatives. You learn more about our CS40, and our residential experience, and the leadership there. So it's exciting time to be at WashU and be a student. And so I know that you're going to have a different experience, but you're going to get that student leadership and those opportunities to engage with others and meet other community members. It may just look a bit different.

**Rob Wild:** All I would add to that, I have the good fortune of being on a call with our student leaders yesterday. At Washington University, our undergraduate student government is called "Student Union" which I know for many campuses is a building. But here, that's our student government. And I would say the mood among that team was elation. They were very relieved that we were coming back in person and that we wanted them back on campus. And they immediately on the call I was on began suggesting how they were going to develop events and support student groups in a different way. So the a cappella group is example that we've talked about in the past. We have a great a cappella community with many different groups on campus. All of those will be here. In fact, many of them have been performing on these crazy Zoom-cappellas or whatever you call them that you've seen on Facebook and other places over the last few months. But they will be back in person, and they're already thinking about how do we--do we need to do practice differently? Do we need to do our recruitment differently? Do we need to do our concerts differently? And so as Kawanna and Katharine both said, one of the key decisions about having students back involves the fact that they're not just going to come back and be locked in their room and go to class. We know that they're going to, and we want them to, experience many of the things that Washington University has become known for. It's just going to be different for the fall. As I know, we will have all of you for four years, this is going to be a different start. But over four years, we're going to be back to the type of Washington University experience that we have become known for, for all of your students.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks. A little understanding of Washington's vernacular: Student Union is our student government association and CS40 is our Residence Hall Association. So these are little bit different names than some of our institutions. Kawanna, a couple of housing questions for you. First, for incoming transfer students who do not have guaranteed housing, the same way that a first-year student does, what support services does the university provide them in finding housing? So again, all of our first-year students are guaranteed housing on campus. Our transfer students, unfortunately, aren't always able to be guaranteed that as well. So what can we do for them?

**Kawanna Leggett:** So we don't require our transfer students to live on campus, like we do our first-year students, but we do work closely with admissions and have a small group of transfer students that do live in our residential communities. It may not be on campus, but it is a part of our Residential Life portfolio. So we'll work closely with our transfer students. We have a good size group of-- it varies each year from 30 to 50 students. Those students that are unable to get Residential Life housing, we actually work closely with our partners in Quadrangle Housing. We have a position in Residential Life, which is the Assistant Director

for Undergraduate Student Life for off-campus students, that will work closely with any student to direct them to private properties that we know to be positive experiences for people in housing. So contact Residential Life will walk through how we can best support you, be it within Residential Life Housing or off-campus in private properties.

**Katharine Pei:** And then a second housing question for you, Kawanna. A lot of our housing is currently set up that students either share a common bathroom with many people on the floor or would be in a double or a triple. What considerations are you all making in the fall as more public health guidance becomes available about our living spaces?

**Kawanna Leggett:** So as we discussed earlier, there are many planning groups, and one of the most important groups is the housing group that will be working with public health officials and many representatives across the campus to make recommendations around what housing density will look like. And so there is various scenario planning. That includes continue housing as be done in many ways or to look at the reduction of our occupancy. No decisions have been made just yet as we're really looking for the guidance of public health. We hope to be able to have a clear direction by July 31st to give more details about what our occupancy will look like. I will say that for our incoming students, traditionally, we have the released housing assignments on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Given our new timeline for when the semester will begin, we have made the decision to release housing assignments on August 1st. That gives us a little bit more time to plan around our occupancy strategies as well as in alignment with the new academic calendar. So incoming students can expect housing assignments to be released on August 1st.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. This next question is probably both for Jen and Kirk. What is Washington's plan to support students, faculty staff who may have underlying health conditions that will put them at higher risk for COVID-19, particularly when thinking about their classroom experience.

**Kirk Dougher:** Go ahead, Jen. Go ahead.

**Jen Smith:** No, it's okay. I have to say very quickly, I mean, part of the reason we're supporting our faculty to design these classes that will be offered in-person and remote simultaneously is the idea that we will enable that academic experience to work well, either if a faculty member needs to be outside the classroom for their own health and safety or if a student does. And so that's why we're working hard to make sure that underlying health conditions or concerns don't get in the way of a student's academic schedule or academic progress. And so we're focusing on having a good quality of potential for remote engagement for the very large majority of our classes.

**Kirk Dougher:** And from a health standpoint, we're also looking to make sure that we're standing up processes and procedures that allow students and faculty to transition into one of those self-selected categories. And if I'm immunocompromised and I don't feel comfortable going to class, we want to be able to eliminate barriers that would require a great deal of effort on their part to be able to obtain that accommodation. Rather, we want to make it easily accessible for them so that one, people can select those and two, it doesn't dissuade them or cause any additional difficulty beyond what they're already struggling with.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Rob, I have an athletics question for you that I'm not sure you can answer because I don't know that there is an answer. But we have so many new students who are excited to participate in varsity sports. What update do we have from our athletic conference about what that might look like?

**Rob Wild:** Yeah. Great question. And, to all of the parents of fall athletes or any athlete coming in, congratulations. We are very excited to get back to competitive Bear sports here at WashU. So this is a

question that is being widely discussed across all divisions of college athletics as those who are coming to WashU as an athlete family, you know that we're division three. In the fall, we're a member of two different conferences. One is the University Athletic Association which includes schools such as Emory, Rochester, NYU, Chicago, Brandeis, Case Western, Carnegie Mellon, as well as, for football, something called the CCIW, which is a slightly more local and regional conference.

We've been talking almost daily with all schools. And our athletic director here has been talking with all schools and leaders of those conferences. We are excited that we're continuing to make plans to have fall seasons for both of those conferences. We don't know yet if we're going to be required to make modifications around travel or perhaps play more local competition rather than more distant competition. We're not sure yet what we're going to be able to do around spectators and events on campus. One of the planning groups that I mentioned earlier, Anthony Azama, our Director of Athletics is sitting on that to participate and understand what that looks like. But all of our fall athletes received an email yesterday right after the message was sent from the Chancellor just offering our commitment, as of today, that we're going to move forward with fall season. Now, for our fall athletes, because that season will start before our academic calendar will start, we likely will need to work out some special situations regarding housing and food and meals for those athletes, a small orientation for them. We will have all that information by August 1st along with our other planning timelines and we will continue to monitor the guidance that's coming from the NCAA as well as our conferences.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks, Rob. I have a couple of more questions that I think might actually be you. Given that the calendar has been pushed back for the start of school date, has consideration been made about adjusting any of the tuition or fees specifically related to room and board?

**Rob Wild:** Yes. Great question. I will say, again, just on the tuition side, because we were able to adjust our academic calendar to be the same number of weeks that we would if we'd started on August 24th, we're not making any changes to the tuition. We are reviewing what this change has done to our housing dates as well as the impact on how we calculate our dining plan rates. I can't tell you today if we're going to make adjustments to those, but we are going to finalize our decisions prior to the time when fall bills are due. So you will know about that then. I will also say quickly, on some of our other fees, there is an orientation fee that you may have seen as well as a health and wellness fee. We're looking at those as well and trying to understand the impacts of these new dates on those. Obviously, any of the impacts would be a downward direction on those fees, which I think is important to know. And I do want to say, I know all of you have been working with our-- I should say those of you who have been working with our financial aid team at WashU have received those awards already as part of your admission. I do want to underscore an important point that if my colleague Ronee Turner and Mike Runiewicz from the undergraduate admissions team are here would say to all of you, these are very challenging times for all of our families. There's a lot of unemployment changes. There are changes to companies and family financial status. I do want to just acknowledge and point out that if at any time, not just this fall, but during your four years at Washington University, something happens with your family that has changed your financial status, we want you to let us know. We want you to let us know right away, and our team is prepared to try to work with you in the event that that does happen. We've been talking a lot about that and trying to prepare for those contingencies in this ever-changing economic landscape that we're experiencing right now.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Kirk and Kawanna, two questions. One, with all these discussions about what may or may not be safe and plans to keep our communities safe, do we think that there's a possibility campus would become closed to visitors?

**Kirk Dougher:** So good question, and a complicated one as well. So right now, the public health wisdom is to reduce or eliminate any unnecessary contacts for students as much as possible. The more person-to-

person exposures that we get, the higher the transmission that students are going to face. So right now, our intent for the foreseeable coming months is to be able to reduce all the visitors on the campus that we can. Going into fall, again, this gradual reopening, there may be some different guidelines in place depending on what's happening with how testing is going, with how the exposures and the new cases and a number of different things, but rest assured that we will keep as the Chancellor continues to direct us, the priority being on the safety and security of our students. So we want to make sure that that's going to be the case. With regard to testing, I've seen a couple of questions asking about testing. And we are looking at different options on how we might be able to make those things happen and avail ourselves to getting students tested if they so choose and if they are presenting with symptoms. So we're working on avenues to be able to make sure that that can happen. And if and when that does, one of the questions was about will it be happening on campus? Will there be a site for that on campus? And the answer is, yes.

**Kawanna Leggett:** And my only follow-up would be we would continue to follow those public health guidelines as it relates to guests in the residential communities. And we would be very clear about setting that expectation. And we have live-in staff that would continue to support students as I know that would be a challenge of saying you can't have guests. And so we will ensure that we clearly communicate what the expectations are. But we have to follow what the public health guidelines are.

**Katharine Pei:** And a follow-up question. If a student were to become sick, whether with COVID or something else, Kirk, could you first explain what are our resources with Habif Health and Wellness for students who are sick? And then Kawanna, what is being discussed about quarantine or isolation options within the residence halls?

**Kirk Dougher:** Yeah, so we are being very thoughtful in trying to develop different scenario plans for the fall with regard to sick visits and, in fact, all visits to our Habif medical services. So we are designing different ways to be able to engage the physical environment down there to where we will have well visits coming in one entrance and other sick visits coming in a different entrance. And potentially some segregation with regard to respiratory ailments. So we're looking to be able to make sure that those visits to our Habif Medical Center are safe for people that are coming in. For those that might come in contact with, be worried about, or be demonstrating COVID consistent symptoms, we want to be able to make sure that we have a process in place, which we do already, given the number of students that we anticipate on the campus coming back. To be able to test them in a way that is feasible. To have the PPE that our providers are going to need. And then to be able to make sure that we have the ability to put them into quarantine or other kinds of situations that will make sure that they are safe in the campus and the community is safe.

**Kawanna Leggett:** Well, I don't have too much to add but I just will say that a part of the scenario planning is looking at how we acquire good isolation and quarantine spaces. And so that is a part of the planning experiences that we will be doing over the next couple weeks. Because it will be important that if we do identify a case, that we have the proper guidelines in place to isolate and ensure that we have those housing beds separate from the other communities. And the challenge here-- I will say the challenge here is in the spring we typically have a few more vacancies where we have some luxury within the residential life portfolio. In the fall, we just don't have that. And so part of the scenario planning is looking at how we acquire more isolation and quarantine spaces. So more to come on that note.

**Katharine Pei:** Thank you. Rob, so many questions about Thanksgiving. Will students be able to travel home for Thanksgiving? Will the university require students to stay on campus? What thoughts are being developed around that? I think you're on mute.

**Rob Wild:** Yep, I'm on mute. Did that. Love when that happens on Zoom. So great question. We've been getting that question a lot. The answer is we don't know. We are going to make travel recommendations closer to those dates. I would not buy that Thanksgiving ticket just yet today at the end of May. I'm hoping that as we get closer to the start of the semester, we'll have a clearer sense about what the university might be asking around Thanksgiving travel. I had a parent message on the last call and say that she had spent so much quality time with her daughter over the last two and a half months and would be for the next three months that she was fine with us keeping her for Thanksgiving. But in all seriousness, we know, especially for our first year of families, this is a long time for students to be away from families. So we are going to do everything we can not to have travel restrictions, if that makes sense. It may be possible that we would have regional travel restrictions based on what the country landscape looks like and the guidance that we're getting from the CDC and our own health department here. But we don't have that answer yet. But when we do, we'll let you know.

**Katharine Pei:** Thanks, Rob. We are going to ask one last question for the evening. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get to all the questions. Families, we know there are literally a hundred questions that we weren't able to answer yet. But we will build up the FAQ that's on the university's COVID site. And so one of my colleagues is going to put that site for you in the chatbox. And please stay tuned next week for some more information. We are doing another webinar for families next week. You can find that information on the family's website. And so, hopefully, we'll be able to answer some additional questions live then. We are placing this recording online next week as well. So if you'd like to review or would like to send to someone who couldn't join, please do so. So, Rob, last question for you is we've talked a lot about wanting to make sure that our students get connected to campus and our community really soon. Can you tell us what one of our next steps might be for connecting our first-year students to some of our peer mentors?

**Rob Wild:** Absolutely. We have a great program here of mostly sophomore students who we've selected and have come to us and asked to work with our new students. They are called WUSAs. I know that sounds weird. It's W-U-S-A- Washington University Student Associates. Welcome to our world of acronyms here. But this is really a terrific and excited group of students who is going to be reaching out to all of your students next week to begin forming smaller communities to help get them acclimated, answer their questions, talk about study tips, and answering questions about life in the residence halls. These are all students who have experienced some time at Washington University and will have lots of great advice and information for your students. Because, sometimes, your students like to ask questions of other students rather than us on this panel. Because our students really know the real deal and how things work at Wash U. I do want to say, again, as I said at the outset, how grateful we are that you all have chosen Washington University for next year. We are so excited to have your students with us. We know this is going to be a historic way to start with this great class of 2024. It's starting at Washington University. But we are looking forward to the next four years and getting to know you and our students. And I just, again, want to say thank you.

**Katharine Pei:** Panelists, thank you so much for speaking with us tonight and sharing the information you were able to about the university's plans for the fall. New students and families, to echo Rob's comments, we are just so excited to welcome you to our community. I work in the First Year Center. I've made my life's work working with new students and families because I think that it's the most exciting time for a student in their college career. And so while we weren't able to answer all the questions tonight, and there's still a lot of "we're working on it" and "we don't know", we promise we are working on it and we will get you those answers as soon as possible. So, as I said, we will place a recording of this webinar on [families.wustl.edu](https://families.wustl.edu). We will make sure that the university's COVID FAQs are updated with many of the questions that were asked tonight and those we couldn't get to. And if there's anything else that we can do to be of service to you as you transition to our community, please reach out to us. The First Year Center

can be reached at [firstyearcenter@wustl.edu](mailto:firstyearcenter@wustl.edu). You can go to the [newstudents.wustl.edu](http://newstudents.wustl.edu) site. You can go to the [families.wustl.edu](http://families.wustl.edu) site. But we are here for you. And just welcome to Wash U, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall. Have a great evening.