

Frequently Asked Questions for COVID-19 and the 20/21 Academic Year

Living & Learning Pods

WHAT ARE LIVING & LEARNING PODS?

In the Fall semester, students will gather together in self-contained units - 'pods' - that live and learn together. These small groups of students, ranging from 7 to 18 students in size, will share a residence hall, dine together, study the same package of courses together, and likely work together. Each Living & Learning Pod (LLP) will be dedicated to specific areas of study and supported by a small team of dedicated faculty and staff. Most students will participate in two different LLPs through the course of the semester - one in Fall Block 1, and one in Fall Block 2.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

The advantages of LLPs are multiple. They allow students to have close, meaningful interactions in a low-risk environment, which also creates a healthy space that our faculty and staff will be able to work within. Should someone on campus test positive, disruption of instruction will only be experienced among those in the same LLP, rather than the whole campus. LLPs will stay together, as a unit, for a five-week academic block, with appropriate safety/hygiene methods taken for the interim transition from one pod to another.

HOW WILL BLOCKS WORK?

There will be two five week blocks within the Fall semester during which time you belong to one LLP. Fall Block 1 is from Friday Sep 11th to Oct 15th. Fall Block 2 runs from Oct 21st to Nov 24th. Students will change LLPs from Block 1 to Block 2 depending on their course choice. Fall Block 3 runs from Nov 30th to Dec 11th and is only for Expedition II students.

HOW WILL PODS/HOUSING WORK?

Because Sterling has had to make some adjustments to how classes are offered (i.e. in a block schedule), many students will need to update their course selections. The Registrar will send out details of the re-registration process on June 15th - this process will involve selecting the top three pods of choice for each Block. The deadline for these changes is now June 30th and more information will be forthcoming after June 15th. Housing assignments will be made after course selection has been finalized.

I'M A COMMUTER STUDENT, WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN A POD?

Yes! Just select your top three choices of pods for each Block in the same way as residential students. Do note that commuting may not be able to be accommodated for off-campus pods.

HOW MANY STUDENTS WILL BE IN THE SAME POD?

LLP size will vary depending on curricular and residential needs, estimated LLP size is from 7-18 students.

WILL THE COURSES DURING THE SUMMER RESIDENCY BE ORGANIZED AS A LIVING & LEARNING POD?

Yes.

WILL I HAVE TO MOVE BETWEEN PODS? DO I HAVE TO MOVE HALFWAY THROUGH THE SEMESTER?

We are going to wait and see how the beginning of the semester goes before we determine if that is necessary. The reasoning behind moving to a new pod for the second block is to ensure minimal interactions amongst our student population. If there is a COVID case, an individual's close contacts would hopefully only be the individuals in their pod, so it would make tracing close contacts easier and decrease the chance of campus-wide disruption. If we are feeling confident with the regional environment and that our Commitment to Shared Responsibility is being respected, we may not have individuals move and only continue the living and eating aspect of pod life, but have students attend classes with appropriate PPE and social distancing.

COULD SOMEONE LIVE OFF CAMPUS FOR ONE OF THE 5-WEEK BLOCKS AND THEN MOVE ON CAMPUS FOR A 5 WEEK POD?

Yes! Please keep in mind that there may be a need to quarantine separate from your pod, depending on where you are coming from and the Vermont Department of Health travel guidelines at that time.

ON CAMPUS LIVING FEELS DEPENDENT ON HOW THAT WILL LOOK LIKE IN MID JULY, WHEN CAN WE WITHDRAWAL THE DECISION TO LIVE ON CAMPUS?

Great point about deadlines! On Monday, July 6th, the College is emailing students their pod assignment, which hall they have been assigned, and a list of their classmates/ podmates. Students will have the opportunity to change their choices by Wednesday, July 15, by either emailing Laura Spence or Megan Banner. If you would like to petition to live off campus, the deadline to inform Megan Banner will be Wednesday, July 15.

Academics

WHAT WILL THE ACADEMIC SCHEDULE LOOK LIKE?

Within a pod, the day-to-day schedule of academics and work will be determined by the pod instructor(s). Because all students in a pod will be studying together as a cohort, instructors will be creative with the scheduling, adapting it to best meet the needs of the curriculum. For example, field trips may not need to be constrained by other class schedules and chores. Faculty may choose to incorporate overnight or multi-day trips into the schedules.

WILL THERE BE GLOBAL FIELD STUDIES CLASSES THIS YEAR?

Sterling is excited to offer a full complement of field studies ranging in scope from local, to regional, to distant from the Vermont campus. For example, there will be a five week long field-based study in the Nulhegan Basin in Vermont, a winter immersion course examining ice in the northeast USA, and a semester-long program in the Southwest for those students who would prefer to take their studies on the road. There will be no trips involving international travel this academic year.

All campus and field-based programs will follow health and safety best practices pertaining to COVID-19 as outlined by state and federal authorities and will fully comply with policies as required by Governor Scott.

WILL THERE STILL BE AN INTENSIVE?

In the Fall, there will be two intensives - an early Fall Intensive and a late Fall Intensive - but they will not have a full range of offerings for all students. During the early Fall intensive (Aug 24- Sep 6) all new students will be participating in A Sense of Place: Expedition I and course assistants/teaching assistants will be invited to return to help with that course. In addition, the following things will be happening on campus during this time:

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- Completion of the Spring 2020 Draft Animal Power Systems II for some students
- Completion of the Summer residency for Summer Ecology and Integrated Farming Practicum students.
- Students might want to do an independent study remotely during intensive and get started on their SYRP.

In the late Fall Intensive (Nov 30- Dec 11), Expedition II: Winter Outdoor Challenge will run, and only students participating in that class will remain on campus studying.

WILL I BE ABLE TO GO HOME FOR THE FALL BREAK DURING OCTOBER?

We are asking that students remain within Vermont throughout the semester, including fall break. If you need to leave the state, you will need to coordinate your travels and conditions of your return with the Dean of Student Life and the campus nurse. Returning to campus might include a self-quarantine for 7 days and a COVID-19 test or a self-monitoring of symptoms to be reported to the campus nurse and the Department of Health. For students who will be taking Expedition II, there may be similar expectations if you choose to leave the state during November Break. We will be making these decisions based on the guidance of the CDC and the Vermont Department of Health.

WHY ARE WE GOING HOME FOR THANKSGIVING AND NOT RETURNING UNTIL THE SPRING SEMESTER?

Having students travel home for Thanksgiving and then return to campus increases the possibility of introducing COVID to our campus and thus would require the quarantine process to start all over again. Sterling has adjusted the calendar to minimize risk. Remember, students participating in Expedition II: Winter Outdoor Challenge will need to be on campus for another two weeks of class following Thanksgiving.

WHEN WILL THE SPRING SEMESTER START?

The Spring calendar is still being developed, but it is likely that the Spring semester will start earlier than usual.

I'M A GRADUATING SENIOR, WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO TAKE THE CLASSES I NEED?

Sterling has prioritized graduating seniors when developing the block schedule to ensure that all graduating seniors can complete their degree requirements on time. If there are any concerns about meeting your requirements, check in with your advisor who can discuss all the different options for you to graduate on time as planned.

The academic office will be flexible in a number of different ways. It will start with a conversation with your advisor. Possible options include:

- Substitute a class that is on the major check list with a different one to meet the required competencies. It could be one you already have taken or one that you can take in the coming year.
- Independent study.
- Take an online class from another institution.
- Develop a portfolio on how you have met the particular competencies.

ARE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS GOING TO BE MADE MORE FLEXIBLE?

Yes, potentially. As always, start with a conversation with your advisor to best plan for the Fall. If there appear to be roadblocks or barriers, work with your advisor to consider one of the following possibilities: a. substitution for the requirement with a different course you have already taken or will be taking; b. an independent study that will allow you to meet that requirement; c. waiving that requirement due to prior experience e.g. gained through work; or d. adding on or modifying assignments within classes you will be taking to try and meet a particular competency.

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WHAT WILL LEARNING SUPPORT LOOK LIKE FOR COMMUTERS AND FOLKS TAKING ONLINE CLASSES?

In acknowledgement that there is a different type of support needed for online and in person classes, Sterling will address this in the Student Engagement Committee. As a reminder, the committee consists of Megan Banner, Anne Morse, Laura Spence, Laura Lea, John Zaber, and Carol Dickson. We will examine what might be different avenues of support for online classes and in person. Also, on campus support will look a little different because John Zaber will not be able to meet in person with everybody and a lot of his meetings with students will be conducted remotely.

WHAT DOES 'HYBRID CLASS' MEAN?

Hybrid refers to part of the class being delivered in-person and part of the class delivered online.

HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH MY ADVISOR, IF NOT PART OF MY POD?

Advisors will be available to meet with their advisees as frequently as usual either over the telephone or via Zoom. In addition, you may be able to meet in person out-of-doors. Advisors will also be hosting weekly group advising meetings which will be an opportunity for students to participate in goal-setting and reflection exercises with a small group of students from across pods.

WHAT WILL MY INTERACTION WITH THE FACULTY LOOK LIKE?

Students will interact with the faculty instructors of their pods on an almost daily basis, both in-person, and online. These interactions will be in the classroom and in the field as usual.

WILL I CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO UTILIZE THE WOOD SHOP, FORGE, LAB, AND COMPUTER LAB?

Most spaces on campus will have their access restricted to just one pod. Students who need a particular space to pursue their Senior Year Research Project or an independent study will have to seek permission from the Dean of Academics.

WILL THE LIBRARY BE OPEN?

The library will be functioning, but will not be open for general access by students, faculty or the public. Petra, our librarian, will help students access the books and resources they need - offering a "curbside delivery service"! Books reserved for particular courses will be accessible for students within the classroom space allocated to their pod.

HOW WILL ONLINE CLASSES OPERATE?

Online classes may be conducted either asynchronously, or synchronously, or a combination. Each online class will be contained within either Fall Block 1 or Fall Block 2. In each pod description in the course catalog it is indicated whether there will be space in the schedule for a student to take an online course while also fully participating in that pod.

WILL WE HAVE OPTIONS TO DO PASS/FAIL?

The grading policy for the Fall semester will revert to that in place before Spring 2020, in other words, no pass/fail options will be available.

HOW WILL I ACCESS LEARNING SUPPORT?

John Zaber, Director of Learning Support, will continue to offer learning support for all students who seek it. If you are not in the LLP in which John is instructing then you will be able to meet with John via Zoom.

HOW DO I MANAGE POD LIFE AND MY SYRP THAT REQUIRES ME TO TRAVEL (IN VERMONT)?

We ask that students remain on campus during the first 2 weeks (or 7 days and a negative test) of 1st block. After which, we ask that you keep a record of the dates you leave campus and where you go, in case there is a need to trace your close contacts due to exposure to COVID-19. Please communicate directly with the Dean of Student Life if you will require you to leave campus during the first 2 weeks.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR CLASSES?

Students will receive an email from the Registrar detailing the registration process on Monday, June 15th. Students will be invited to sign up for their top three pod choices in Fall Block 1, and their top three choices for Fall Block 2. The deadline for registering for pods will be 30th June.

CAN I STILL DO AN INDEPENDENT STUDY?

Yes, although the timing of when you can pursue your independent study will depend on which LLP you have chosen. In the course catalog it is made clear in the description of each pod whether there will be space for students to also pursue an independent study during that five-week Block or not. If students sign-up for two successive pods that do not allow space for independent study, then they could time their IS work for either the early- or late-Fall intensive.

CAN I NOT SIGN UP FOR A POD BUT STILL LIVE ON CAMPUS DOING INDEPENDENT WORK?

You will most likely be assigned to a pod for living and dining arrangements, though you would not participate in the classes with the other pod residents.

CAN I ONLY TAKE ONE CLASS WITHIN A POD, NOT ALL OF THEM?

Potentially. For some pods, the two classes are listed as co-requisites. This means the curriculum of the two classes will be interdependent and woven together. In other pods, you may opt to take just one of the two courses paired and take an online class or do an independent study instead. Whether or not courses within a pod are co-requisites is noted in the course catalog description.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM ONE CLASS WITHIN A POD AND STILL PARTICIPATE IN THE OTHER?

This is likely to be examined on a case-by-case basis. As always, start with a conversation with your advisor!

HOW WILL PLACES IN PODS BE ASSIGNED?

The assignment of students to pods will take the following factors into account: student's preference, student seniority, student major requirements (including self-design majors), course enrollment caps, pod housing limitations, and classroom size limitations.

We are waiting until June 30th, which is when re-registration ends, and then we will be allocating students into the pod, seeing how large they are and then assigning a dorm space to them. We will be communicating mid-July about which pod you are in and a roster of the other students in that pod as well. We hope this addresses one concern that has been communicated where folks might not feel comfortable in the pod they have been assigned to. We are hoping that by providing a roster of the pod participants, folks can have a conversation if they want to move to another pod. Megan Banner will be looking at your accommodation documents as well and be in direct communication about dorm selection and your accommodation needs.

WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN ONE OF THE CLASSES IN A POD BUT REALLY WANT TO TAKE THE OTHER ONE?

There could be the opportunity to act as a Teaching Assistant for the one course in the pod that you have already taken - contact the instructor to inquire. Alternatively, it may be a pod where the

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classes are not listed as co-requisites and you can opt to take just the one class while also pursuing an online class or independent study.

CAN I TA A CLASS IN A POD?

Yes, if you have taken a class before and are interested in joining it again in a teaching assistant capacity you may be able to join that pod. Students could potentially TA both courses in a pod, or just one of them, while taking the other as a regular student. First steps in this are to contact the pod instructor(s)!

CAN WE DO AN INTERNSHIP FOR 5 WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER?

Yes!

TO FULFILL THE F-1 VISA REQUIREMENTS: BECAUSE INTENSIVES ARE NOT RUNNING AS NORMAL AND INTERNSHIPS ARE TYPICALLY 6 CREDITS, DOES IT SOUND REALISTIC TO DO AN INTERNSHIP PLUS AN INDEPENDENT STUDY TO REACH 12 CREDITS (MINIMUM)?

Yes that might be possible, start with a conversation with your advisor, and then Carol Dickson who is internship coordinator.

IF PEOPLE DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE BEING ON CAMPUS IS THERE AN OPTION TO DO A SEMESTER OF ONLINE/INDEPENDENT STUDIES?

Yes!

Wendell Berry Farming Program

WENDELL BERRY FARMING PROGRAM: PORT ROYAL CAMPUS

In the Fall 2020 semester, the Port Royal Bank Building will serve as primary classroom and faculty offices for the WBFP, and the Brown Farm house will serve as a student center and residential housing. Residents and commuters will follow the same social distancing and Healthy at Work guidelines as outlined by the College and by the Kentucky Department of Public Health.

HOW WILL LIVING, LEARNING PODS BE INCORPORATED INTO THE WBFP STRUCTURE?

The Wendell Berry Farming Program has been living the "Learning Pod" life in Henry County since its inception. In Fall 2020, we'll build on last year's discoveries about rural landscapes and cultures, pastures and forests, and critters on the hoof. We'll start by honing radical agrarian leadership in Community Organizing for Social and Political Change during a two-week intensive session. Then we'll transition into a five-week session that entwines Whole Farm Planning with Small Business Management, with a smattering of SYRPI in the mix (1 credit hour to get the ball rolling). We'll go headlong into the woods with mules and oxen in Restorative Forestry for a second five-week session, during which we'll also devote significant energy to SYRPI projects, calling into play lessons in farm planning (2-5 credits). Folks who have not yet delved into Soil, Plants, and Microbes I will have a chance to do so during a December two-week intensive. All the while, we'll practice our neighborly Work Program at the Brown Farm and in the greater Port Royal area.

WHAT ARE KENTUCKY'S CURRENT QUARANTINE AND TRAVEL GUIDELINES?

Kentucky's travel ban ended May 22. People are encouraged to stay Healthy and Home. There are no quarantine requirements for people who come to Kentucky from out-of-state. Out-of-state travelers and others who are traveling within the state are encouraged to:

- * Frequently washing hands with soap and water.
- * Cover your coughs and sneezes.

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- * Avoid close contact with others.
- * Stay home if sick.

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, they should self-quarantine for 14 days. They should stay indoors as much as possible to limit contact with others. They should avoid public places.

Student & Resident Life

WHAT WILL POD LIFE LOOK LIKE?

Learning & Living Pods will consist of a group of students who will live together in a residential hall, take the same classes, and eat together.

WILL WE HAVE TO MOVE EVERY FIVE WEEKS?

Potentially, yes. As we have experienced over the past 3 months, COVID-19 restrictions will most likely change and evolve over the course of the semester. We will gauge our campus environment and regional environment throughout the first block and come to a decision as soon as we feel confident in doing so. Our goal will be to make sure students are feeling comfortable and safe within their living arrangements.

AM I ABLE TO REQUEST TO MOVE TO ANOTHER RESIDENTIAL HALL?

No. Because we are adopting the new cohort model, residential halls will be designated to specified pods. Please work directly with the Dean of Student Life if you have any particular concerns or issues and they will be able to assist you to the best of their ability.

WILL REQUESTS FOR SINGLE ROOMS/PRIVATE BATHROOMS STILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WITH HOUSING?

We will work our hardest to do so; folks with medical documentation will receive priority on these efforts. The number of students signed up for each pod will most likely determine where folks will be housed. Private bathrooms will not be able to be accommodated for folks in Madison. Megan Banner has a number of accommodation requests and will be working closely with Laura Lea and Laura Spence. If Megan Banner identifies a potential conflict between the pod preferences of a student and their housing accommodations, she will communicate directly to the student to talk about options.

WHAT IS A COMMITMENT TO SHARED RESPONSIBILITY? WHY DO I NEED TO SIGN IT?

In order for us to maintain a low risk campus environment, all community members - students, faculty, and staff- will need to commit to the shared responsibility of keeping ourselves and others safe. The Commitment to Shared Responsibility is a list of required behaviors that will decrease potential spread of COVID-19 and will be established under the guidance of the CDC, the VT & KY Departments of Health, and other regional colleges. By signing it, you are indicating that you have read and understand them and are agreeing to follow the new set of guidelines.

The Dean of Student Life will be holding a series of Student Life Council Meetings (via Zoom) at the end of June and beginning of July to solicit student feedback and to create dialogue about students concerns regarding the Commitment to Shared Responsibility.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE BREAKS THE COMMITMENT TO SHARED RESPONSIBILITY?

The Commitment to Shared Responsibility will be an added addendum to our College's Policy of Dangerous and Disruptive Behavior. When a student's behavior constitutes a serious disruption or danger to the living, working, or learning environment that the College seeks to create, the College may respond in a number of ways, from providing needed supplies to mediation to separating the student from the institution, if necessary.

WHEN WILL WE FIND IT OUT AND HOW WILL STUDENTS WHO NEED SUBSTANCE FREE DORM BE ACCOMMODATED?

More information to come about substance free spaces.

WILL FOLKS BE ABLE TO GO TO THE SMOKE SPOT IF THEY KEEP 6 FEET APART?

Most likely yes. We are still waiting on the guidelines from the Governor and will be able to provide a more solid answer then. All students will also be receiving some information about the risks of smoking. We recognize that substance use can be a big part of campus culture and we want to provide harm reduction information so that you can make your own informed decision.

AM I GOING TO BE ABLE TO HANG OUT WITH MY FRIENDS THAT ARE NOT IN MY POD?

Yes! But it is going to look a little different. We encourage interaction with other pods, as long as you are adhering the precautions that are described in the Commitment to Shared Responsibilities.

HOW WILL IT WORK IF TWO PEOPLE ARE PARTNERS IN DIFFERENT PODS?

Very important question and one that many student life teams across the world are grappling with! The College is still researching best practices for dating and romantic relationships on college campuses. At least for the first 7 days on campus, all residential students must complete a campus wide quarantine, where visitors are not allowed within the residential halls of other pods.

Our hope is that after folks arrive on campus and residential students complete a successful one week quarantine, we will gain confidence that our community members will continue to uphold the Commitment to Shared Responsibility, and then we can then introduce new guidelines that ensure safe social interactions.

WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE VISITORS FROM OFF-CAMPUS?

At this time, the answer is no. For arrival day, each residential student will be allowed to have two guests help them move in and they all will need to complete a health screening that will include a temperature check and collection of questions to determine if they have or have been around with individuals who have presented COVID-like symptoms. As stated before, things may change and we will be adapting as our campus and regional environment evolves.

WILL THE IT INFRASTRUCTURE BE STRENGTHENED SO I CAN ATTEND THE CLASSES AND E-GATHERINGS I WILL NEED TO KEEP MY EXPERIENCE ROBUST?

Sterling made a number of technology improvements last spring and has also been awarded a \$25,000 grant for additional IT improvements in the pods.

WHAT DO I DO ON THE WEEKENDS?

WILL I BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE CAMPUS?

Each pod will have different schedules, depending on the classes. During the weekends, some pods will have field trips and others will have weekends to themselves. Students will be able to leave campus after the first two weeks (or 7 days and a negative test), as long as they stay within the state and keep record of where they are going.

WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO WORK OFF CAMPUS?

We understand many of you have jobs off campus to help pay for your expenses. We ask that students remain on campus during the first 2 weeks (or 7 days + a negative test) of 1st block. Please communicate directly with the Dean of Student Life if your employment will require you to leave campus during the first 2 weeks.

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HOW WILL ARRIVAL DAY WORK?

Details about Arrival Day & Shuttle Services will go out very soon!

I'M A COMMUTER - WHAT DO I DO?

Commuter students will be able to interact with campus and pods similarly to faculty and staff and will also be required to follow the Commitment to Shared Responsibilities - with masks and keeping 6 feet apart in buildings. Masks will not be needed when outside.

In terms of resources you are allowed to use on campus, we will have more information about that once we know how many students have enrolled and classroom spaces have been allocated. Some of our current common spaces might be retrofitted into classrooms.

In regards to the commuter fee, to be determined.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN WITH STUDENT ACTIVITIES?

Student Activities and Community Meeting will be done via Zoom initially. Student Activities will still exist, though the type of activities and purchases will be dependent on if they are along the COVID guidelines. Megan Banner will work closely with Student Activities.

Dining Services

HOW WILL DINING SERVICES OPERATE THIS YEAR?

Students on campus during the 2020-21 academic year will have their meals delivered three times a day (twice on weekends) to their Living & Learning Pods (LLPs) from the Sterling kitchen.

When you fill your plate at Sterling College, you won't be greeted with the same-old, same-old. For each 5-week academic block, the kitchen will design a new menu, keeping in mind the seasonal and local availability of ingredients.

In addition, students can expect a weekly delivery of "snacks and basics" to satisfy your cravings between meals. Cutlery, plates, glassware, etc. will be stocked in each LLP kitchen. The kitchen itself will be revamped and staffed to ensure strict pandemic-specific food safety guidelines. Clear guidelines for students and staff will be established for cleaning, disposal, recycling, and composting.

Once we get a sense of how we are as a campus and community after the first 2 weeks, we might be able to loosen those restrictions and have folks eat in the dining hall in shifts. To do that, it will take a large amount of coordination and planning. Before we would do it, it would be a dialogue amongst the community to go over the risks and expectations.

WILL THERE BE OPTIONS FOR ME TO CHOOSE FROM FOR MY MEALS?

We encourage all students to update their dietary restrictions [here](#), so that Liz and the crew can make meal plans that keep in mind folks preferences and needs!

WILL COMMUTER STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A LUNCH MEAL PLAN?

Yes, Commuter students are able to purchase a meal plan that will include lunch & snacks as a grab and go option.

I HAVE CHANGES TO MY DIETARY RESTRICTIONS, WHO DO I TELL?

Let us know [here](#). If you have any further questions, please contact Liz Chadwick at echadwick@sterlingcollege.edu

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I AM A RESIDENTIAL STUDENT AND WOULD LIKE TO OPT OUT OF THE MEAL PROGRAM, CAN I DO THAT?

Students are only able to opt out of the meal program if they provide a written letter from a healthcare provider stating the individual's dietary needs are unable to be met by campus services. As a small institution, our campus services depend on the support of all students.

Work Program

HOW WILL THE WORK PROGRAM OPERATE UNDER THE NEW POD SYSTEM?

Each pod will act as an independent work crew and thus won't work alongside students in other pods. Some pods may have specialized work assignments that integrate with their coursework, while others may do more general labor that helps to support campus sustainability and self-sufficiency. All students will have a portion of their work contract devoted to cleaning their pod living and learning spaces. Each on-campus block will include a 40 hour work contract.

WHAT ABOUT CHORES?

Farm and Kitchen chores will be covered through work assigned to each pod. There will be no separate chores timesheet or specific number of chore hours required.

WHAT ABOUT WORK ADVISORS & COMMUNITY ADVISORS?

These details will be worked out after students sign up for classes. Jeff Richardson will be leading the work program this semester and Laura and Megan Banner will be working with him at the beginning of July to work out details on how the work program will operate. Our first focus was how to successfully open campus and have a low risk environment. Once we have a better sense of enrollment and pod allocation, we will be able to make the decisions needed for the work program.

WHEN CAN WE EXPECT TO HEAR ABOUT INTERVIEWS FOR CAS?

More information to come about CA interviews by mid-July. CAs will be reporting to Favor.

IS THERE STILL TIME TO APPLY TO BE A WORK ADVISOR OR COMMUNITY ADVISOR?

If you are interested in taking on a leadership position within a pod, please alert the Associate Dean of Work-Learning. Those students who have already applied will be considered first for leadership positions in early July.

I'M A COMMUTER STUDENT, WILL I BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK PROGRAM?

You will not be required to participate in the work program. If funds are available, you may be able to sign up for a contract in consultation with the Associate Dean of Work-Learning.

WHAT ABOUT WORK STUDY?

The Associate Dean of Work-Learning is exploring options regarding work study and will have more details by mid-July.

I'M OPTING TO TAKE REMOTE CLASSES, WILL I BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK PROGRAM?

You will not be required to participate in the work program. If funds are available, you may be able to sign up for a remote work contract in consultation with the Associate Dean of Work-Learning.

WHAT ABOUT ALL COLLEGE WORK DAY?

More details will be announced in early fall, but we are currently planning for a socially distant day of Service to our community.

Wellness Resources

WILL WE STILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE WELLNESS CENTER?

Students will be able to access the Wellness Center by appointment with the campus nurse. Each pod will have robust first aid kits that will be maintained by CAs to make sure that supplies are replenished.

HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO MEET WITH THE CAMPUS NURSE?

In most cases, the campus nurse will be able to provide telehealth services via the phone or Zoom. For in person services, they will work with the student to set up an appointment and will screen for possible COVID-19 symptoms.

HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO ACCESS HEALTH SERVICES?

The Dean of Student Life and campus nurse are currently collaborating with local health and wellness services to provide guidance on how our students will be able to access these services.

WHAT IF A STUDENT'S RELIGION DOESN'T JIVE WITH RECOMMENDED TREATMENT?

There is no treatment other than rest, fluids, nutrition, and monitoring. If a student has moderate to severe COVID-19 symptoms, they may need to go to the hospital for further observation and care.

ARE MASKS GOING TO BE PROVIDED?

Students are going to be expected to bring 3-6 washable masks. It is suggested masks are washed daily. Bandanas count as a cloth mask as long as it is folded over and covers both the mouth and nose. We will have back up masks. These can be provided at cost. We are also asking students to bring a thermometer to self-track temperatures.

WILL WE HAVE A WELLNESS CAR AND VOLUNTEER DRIVES STILL?

We are still working out the details - more information to come!

WILL STUDENTS WHO HAVE COVID ANTIBODIES BE HOUSED SEPARATELY?

Currently the Vermont Department of Health suggests that all students, including those who have COVID antibodies, should go through the same amount of screening and be treated the same as a student who has not contracted COVID.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE HAS A HIGH TEMPERATURE?

Students with elevated temps (100.4 or higher) will be screened either by our campus nurse and/or through the Department of Health. They may be asked to self-quarantine and get tested for COVID-19.

WHAT IF A STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID?

Should this happen, the student will be placed into isolation in South House. Here, they will receive deliveries of meals and will be cared for and monitored on campus in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health during their illness.

HOW WILL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS BE INCORPORATED INTO THE POD PLAN?

Details to come; Sterling is still collaborating with other colleges on the best approach. For example, if an individual with an ESA contracts COVID, they will need to have someone pick up their animal to care for them while they are in isolation.

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HOW WILL FOLKS GET ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ON CAMPUS AND IF THEY ARE OUT IN A FIELD BASED POD?

We are currently working with local mental health services to determine access. For example, in conversations with Pablo, he has mentioned holding outside sessions with his clients and also via Zoom. We are also working with the Behavioral Health Center in Morrisville to work out telehealth options that may be made available to our students.

As for in the field, it will vary on the particular field study. This fall, Farley and Emily will be taking 12 students in the field with a focus on wildlife conservation. It will be an hour away from campus and there will be limited access to wifi so telehealth could be available. Also, folks can discuss needs specifically with Farley and Emily in advance to allow one or two half days to be available if travel is needed.

Financial Aid & Billing

WILL THERE BE CHANGES TO THE WAY BILLING WORKS?

We will continue to bill by the semester. Our tuition will still be billed per credit. Room and Board will be calculated by the blocks you reside on Campus. For example, if you are present for 2 blocks, you will be charged for 10 weeks of room & board.

WHEN WILL WE FIND OUT ABOUT FINANCIAL AID?

Student billing for the fall will be done Mid-July.

COVID-19 Campus Changes

WHAT ARE VERMONT'S CURRENT QUARANTINE AND TRAVEL GUIDELINES?

Vermont Department of Health's website will have [the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 restrictions](#) regarding traveling to and within Vermont. We will be communicating directly with students who will be coming back to campus for Summer Residency and for the Fall Semester to go over these guidelines and Arrival Day protocols.

I'M AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT, WILL I HAVE TO QUARANTINE LONGER?

We will work closely with each international student who is currently abroad to look at each country's regulations in regard to travel and quarantine.

AM I REQUIRED TO BRING CLOTH MASKS AND A THERMOMETER WITH ME?

Yes! More communication about what to expect to bring to campus will come shortly. If you arrive on campus without these items, we will be able to provide them at cost.

WILL COVID-19 TESTING BE PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE?

We are currently working with the Vermont Department of Health to determine what specimen collection and testing will look like for August and the fall. We will be providing updated information, once decisions are made at the state level.

WILL WE BE REQUIRED TO DO A QUARANTINE WHEN WE ARRIVE TO CAMPUS?

At this time, we will be asking students to quarantine within their pod as a household group. This means that you will not be restricted to stay in your room and will be able to interact amongst your housemates within your residents.

HOW WILL COMMON SPACES, PUBLIC BATHROOMS, AND CLASSROOMS BE CLEANED AND SANITIZED?

We are still creating a system where these spaces will be cleaned daily by campus staff. We will be asking that with each use, the individual disinfects the areas they touch before and after use. There will be communication, signage, and discussion about this at a further date.

WILL I BE ABLE TO LEAVE CAMPUS OR THE STATE DURING THE SEMESTER?

At this time, we will be asking that students remain within Vermont throughout the semester, including Fall break and Thanksgiving. If you need to leave the state, you will need to coordinate your travels and conditions of your return with the Dean of Student Life and the campus nurse. Returning to campus might include a self-quarantine for 7 days and a COVID-19 test or a self-monitoring of symptoms to be reported to the campus nurse of the Department of Health. As stated before, We will gauge our campus environment and regional environment throughout the first block and adjust regulations accordingly.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CAMPUS IS SHUT DOWN AGAIN?

We are currently working on a contingency plan if this becomes the case to ensure safe departure of our campus residences, limited disruption of academics, and support to our international students and those with extenuating circumstances.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE TESTS POSITIVE WITH COVID-19 ON CAMPUS?

We are working closely with the Vermont Department of Health and other Vermont colleges to create guidelines and protocols for if this occurs. Given the organization of our pod system, there will likely be limited disruption to the entire campus community. We will be going over these protocols in detail with each student before they arrive on campus.

WITH THE SWITCHING OF THE PODS THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER, ARE WE JUST CONSTANTLY BEING EXPOSED TO NEW PEOPLE EVERY 5 WEEKS?

Great question! The reasoning behind moving to our new pod cohort for the second block is to ensure minimal interactions amongst our student population. If there is a COVID case, an individual's close contacts would hopefully only be the individuals in their pod, so it would make tracing close contacts easier and decrease the chance of campus-wide disruption. Moving the pods will be the most conservative approach. If we are feeling confident with the regional environment and that our Commitment to Shared Responsibility is being respected then, we may not have individuals move and only continue the living and eating aspect of pod life, but have students attend classes throughout campus with appropriate PPE and social distancing.

I AM IMMUNO-COMPROMISED AND AM CONSIDERED 'HIGH RISK', WILL IT BE SAFE FOR ME TO COME TO CAMPUS?

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. All students, faculty and staff are advised to perform the following steps to determine if they are considered to be at higher risk and review CDC guidance on how to mitigate that risk. Regardless of one's health status, engaging in this process will inform all on how to best help individuals at risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Links to CDC webpages are used to ensure that you receive the most up-to-date information.

Step 1: Assess your risk by reviewing CDC's [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#) and [Other-at-Risk Populations](#) webpages, and/ or watching the CDC video [COVID-19: Are you at higher risk for severe illness?](#)

Step 2: Learn how to reduce the risk of getting sick with COVID-19, by reviewing the CDC's [Groups at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#), including action steps for specific medical conditions.

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Step 3: Create a personal health plan. Sterling College will follow CDC and Vermont Department of Health guidance related to COVID-19. Individuals at high risk should consider how they will live and /or work at Sterling College during the COVID-19 outbreak, and what actions, including working or learning remotely, might be necessary to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk.

Step 4: Contact your treating physician or health care provider if you are considered to be at higher risk for severe illness. Discuss your medical condition, health risk, and personal health plan. Together, you will be able to adjust your individual plan, identify actions that might be necessary to reduce your COVID-19 exposure risk, and have an action plan in the event that you do become sick.

Step 5: Request Adjustments/ Accommodations for any measures you may need to reduce your COVID-19 exposure risk. Students should notify the Dean of Student Life and employees should notify their supervisor. They will work with Sterling administration to provide reasonable adjustments and accommodations. Sterling College has policies to protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions in compliance with applicable federal and state privacy and confidentiality laws.

Individuals who are not considered to be at higher risk for severe illness, but are concerned about someone in their home or family, can review the CDC guidance [Prevent Getting Sick](#) and [If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone](#) to create plans to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk.

CDC links:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/what-you-can-do.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.htm>
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Next Steps for Matriculated Students

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR FALL CLASSES?

The Registrar, Laura Lea Berry, communicated by email with all matriculated students on 15th June. In that email are details about the re-registration process. Students are being asked to select their top three pod choices for each block, as well as indicating their preference with respect to independent studies, college teaching experiences, and Senior Year Research Projects. Students should complete their registration before 30th June in order to receive priority in their pod allocation.

I HAVE QUESTIONS! WHO DO I ASK?

Start with the website! If you are still not clear after exploring the questions and answers there then talk to your advisor. They will direct you to the person who can best help you find answers.

I'M AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND I HAVE QUESTIONS! WHO DO I ASK?

Again, start with the website. Next try your advisor, but also feel free to check in with either Charlotte Rosendahl, International Students coordinator, or Laura Lea Berry, the designated school official (DSO) for Homeland Security.

Next Steps for Prospective Students

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I HAVE QUESTIONS! WHO DO I ASK?

Start with the website! If you are still not clear after exploring the questions and answers there then talk to your newly allocated advisor or your Admission counselor. They will either answer your questions, or direct you to the person who can best help you find answers.

I'M AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND I HAVE QUESTIONS! WHO DO I ASK?

Again, start with the website. Next try your newly allocated advisor, your admission counselor, or feel free to check in with either Charlotte Rosendahl, International Students coordinator, or Laura Lea Berry, the designated school official (DSO) for Homeland Security.