

Plans to Reopen Allegheny College

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ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

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Allegheny College looks forward to welcoming our community back to campus for the spring 2021 semester. We are planning to fully reopen for on-campus living and learning accompanied by, and subject to, ongoing guidance from the Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Education, federal agencies, pandemic and disaster management experts, and public health, epidemiological, scientific and medical experts.

As we return to campus, the College will continue to:

1. Prioritize the health and physical and emotional safety of our campus community, while also recognizing the risks associated with reopening
2. Create meaningful partnerships to protect the health and safety of and ensure the resilience of our local community
3. Maintain our commitment to equity and diversity and to equal access for all students to the academic, social and wellness resources available at the College
4. Prioritize community engagement, transparency and open communications
5. Maintain a strong community ethos.

Changes to campus facilities and our day-to-day behaviors will help to reduce the spread of disease on our campus and within the Meadville community. Our understanding of COVID-19 is evolving, and recommendations are ever changing. Our plans for keeping the campus community safe will be updated as new information becomes available.



ACHA

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE HEALTH AGENCY

Circumstances and guidance surrounding COVID-19 remain fluid and complex. To guide the College through the complexities of higher education during a pandemic, we have formed the [Allegheny College Health Agency \(ACHA\)](#). The ACHA provides guidance to the President on testing, contact tracing and mitigation strategies for our community. Membership in the ACHA has evolved as we have moved from planning to implementation; membership will continue to be fluid as our knowledge of the virus evolves and different priorities emerge in how the campus adapts.

To create a sustainable culture of safety and health at Allegheny College in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACHA will oversee:

- 1. Testing the entire campus community**
- 2. Mitigating disease transmission on campus**
- 3. Providing consistent and clear education and communications**
- 4. Monitoring Allegheny's COVID-19 [dashboard](#) and continuously assessing the [Indicators for Closure](#)**

1. Testing the Entire Campus Community

We will be using PCR and antigen testing in three ways throughout the semester: as a move-in baseline, for screening and for diagnosis.

At the start of each semester all faculty, staff and students will be tested three times for COVID-19 using what is known as PCR tests. Details about our testing protocols can be found [here](#). This **baseline** testing provides evidence that the campus is COVID free at the start of classes.

After the initial baseline testing of the entire community upon arrival, **screening tests** will be conducted throughout the semester to ensure there is no asymptomatic community spread of disease. Starting one to two weeks after baseline testing is completed, we will screen 120 members of the campus community each day, five days per week; we will cycle through the entire campus community approximately every 21 days; each group tested will include representatives from across campus, to help us identify the virus before it can spread. Individuals and groups that leave the campus for approved College travel will also be tested before returning to campus.

Symptomatic (ill) students will be cued through the Daily Health Screening email or through emailing ACHA directly to contact Winslow Health Center, which will work with ACHA to obtain a diagnostic test.

2. Mitigating Disease Transmission on Campus

Mitigation strategies to reduce transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, through physical distancing, face coverings, ventilation, reducing the amount of “shared air” between individuals and groups and reorganizing the campus environment will be used across campus. The health of the community is built on the health of each community member. The “[Gator Pledge](#),” is in place, and all community members are required to adhere to it, much like our Honor Code and Code of Conduct. We work together to create a culture of health and safety and [mutual care](#).

As we work to decrease transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on campus, we will focus on mitigating the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in our shared air as well as cleaning and disinfecting the campus.

Our approach to reducing the spread of disease through the air will be framed by a three-zone perspective: (1) **infectious**; (2) **community**; and (3) **public**.

The infectious zone is defined by our close friendships and relationships. These are the people in each of our lives who live so intimately with us that we cannot create any physical distance between us. We spend enough time together (more than 15 minutes without physical distancing and face coverings) to easily spread disease.

ACHA advises students and employees to keep the number of individuals you allow into your infectious zone as small and consistent as possible to decrease the spread of disease.

The community zone is defined as our social circles. These are the groups of people we interact with socially, individually or through a group activity, such as sports, theatre groups, music ensembles, book clubs, sharing a meal or drink at a local establishment, etc. The community zone for a choir will be different from a library book club, for we know that singing sprays droplets farther than whispering in a library.

To decrease the spread of COVID, we need to establish our community zones by prioritizing the social circles/groups we want to be a part of.

ACHA advises students and employees that stewardship of our community zone is

rooted in a simple reality: If there is an outbreak of COVID within the community, all participants are likely to be quarantined, even if they are not sick.

The public zone is defined as the world beyond the six-foot range of most large, infectious droplets. People in our public zone are those who are physically distanced from us at the grocery store, in the classroom, or at the public library, for instance. We come in contact with these individuals in passing or through a shared experience (sitting in a class or late-night studying in the library), but we do not let these people into our **community or infectious zones**.

ACHA advises students and employees to follow all rules for virus mitigation — cover your face, keep your physical distance from others, don’t touch your face and frequently wash your hands.

As we reopen in the spring, we will be focusing the most attention on the **community zone**, since it is within this zone that rates of disease spread vary and all the activities we want to return to exist. Individual and group behaviors need to be assessed and evaluated to determine how much space and what types of physical distancing are needed to ensure safety and decrease the spread of disease.

A combination of individual action and collective changes are needed to control the spread of disease within each of these three zones.

3. Providing Consistent and Clear Education and Communications

Our communication strategy will aim to address the concerns and needs of three specific audiences:

1. Students and parents
2. Campus employees
3. Broader community that is home to the College

Outlining and communicating our specific plan for creating and maintaining a culture of health and safety on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic is a priority. Details of our plan are included here. We will use emails to the campus community as well as social media, the College website and the ALERTAllegheny system, as appropriate, to keep our communities up to date and informed.

4. Monitoring Allegheny's COVID-19 Dashboard and Continuously Assessing the Indicators for Closure

Throughout the semester, ACHA will continue to monitor the health of our community, using

such tools as the [dashboard](#) and the [Indicators for Closure](#). Note that the spring reopening again includes a “campus quarantine” through March 4. Campus quarantine is defined as a restriction of College-sponsored travel and expectation that students remain on campus. This differs from individual/self-quarantine during which individuals stay at home or in a College-designated space for a period of 14 days after a potential exposure to COVID-19. The campus quarantine period will last at least 14 days; if we see any outbreaks, it may extend longer.

Guidelines for Students and Employees

All members of the Allegheny community (students, faculty, staff and administrators) are REQUIRED to comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines detailed below.

1. Daily Health Screening

Every member of the campus community will be asked to answer the following questions every day.

→ In the past 24 hours have you experienced any of the symptoms of COVID-19?

- coughing or shortness of breath
- fever or chills
- new, unexplained muscle or body aches
- new loss of smell or taste
- new, unexplained tiredness or fatigue
- sore throat
- diarrhea

→ In the past 24 hours have you been in direct contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

→ Have you traveled internationally or domestically to an area under stay-at-home orders in the past 14 days?

Data will be used solely for the purposes of ensuring community health. People who answer in the affirmative will be cued to discuss this with a healthcare professional (students, to the Winslow Health Center; employees, to your healthcare practitioner).

For staff: You do not need to report to your supervisor any specific health or personal information; you can simply confirm with your supervisor that you answered yes to one or more of the questions on the daily health check. Please then follow up with Jennifer Padlan, director of human resources, for questions (jpadlan@allegheny.edu).

What to expect:

If employees report symptoms of COVID-19, they should email ACHA immediately and stay home until they receive a reply. If they provide a note from a doctor that says they can return to work, the doctor's note will be honored. If employees have been in contact with a person who has COVID-19, they can return to campus with permission from the ACHA (healthagency@allegheny.edu).

If students report symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, they should email ACHA immediately, then stay in their dorm and leave only to pick up food to eat in their room. If they receive written permission from a doctor to return to campus, they can return to classes sooner.

Travel should be carefully considered and may result in quarantine. Please see section 7 on Travel for details.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals with [certain conditions](#) may have a higher risk for developing severe symptoms associated with COVID-19. Employees who are at higher risk for severe complications associated with COVID-19 will need to work with Human Resources and/or the Provost if they would like to work/teach remotely throughout the pandemic. If employees are caregivers for an individual who is at high risk for severe complications of COVID-19, they should be in touch with Human Resources.

2. Physical Distancing

As a community, we will strive to maintain physical distancing throughout campus. Our goal is to keep at least six feet of space between individuals whenever feasible. If classrooms or workspaces cannot accommodate this spacing, then alternative solutions will be sought. We ask that individuals avoid congregating in common areas. Only one individual at a time should occupy an elevator.

Events or gatherings will limit their attendance in accordance with the evolving Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines. Regardless of how large, all events need to be organized in such a way that physical distancing and face covering requirements are met.

Modifications have been made around campus to support and encourage physical distancing. These modifications include (but are not limited to):

- Installation of physical barriers where appropriate, such as plexiglass sneeze guards and other partitions in areas where it is difficult to maintain six feet of separation
- Modification of classroom seating to maintain six feet of separation and ensure that larger classes are in larger spaces (this means changes in assigned classrooms and using spaces that may not have been used traditionally for classes)

- Signage and other engineering control measures to remind individuals of physical distancing requirements
- Physical guides such as tape on floors or signs on walls to ensure that individuals maintain six feet of distance
- Applying these principles to sports practices and recreational events as well as other close-contact activities, such as theatre or music ensembles, in order to reduce the risk of disease spread among participants.

As a community, we are committed to maintaining physical distance and creating a large “public zone” on campus. As humans, we are relational beings, and we need one another now more than ever. This pandemic does not require us to cut social ties or decrease social interactions. **We seek to support social interactions with each other while maintaining the physical space that is required to decrease disease spread.**

3. Face Coverings

All employees and students must wear face coverings at all times when on campus, and when off campus, in the presence of others and in public settings. **Appropriate use of face coverings is essential to decrease the spread of disease.** Face coverings are only effective if we all participate: “My face covering protects you; your face covering protects me.”

Face coverings must be worn by students and faculty in all classes.

A student will not be allowed to participate in a class without a proper face covering. Enforcement of the face covering requirement will be documented in the [Gator Pledge](#) each student has signed before the beginning of the semester; faculty and staff are required to abide by the Pledge even if they do not physically sign it. The Dean of Students Office coordinates enforcement and disciplinary actions. In the fall, the community came together and wore face coverings to decrease the spread of COVID-19, and this will continue in the spring. Community members can report those who are not compliant through [this form \(students\)](#) or [this one \(faculty/staff\)](#).

Students who cannot wear a mask due to a health concern should contact Sandra Livingston at the Winslow Health Center for a medical exemption.

Allegheny College has provided students and staff with two reusable face coverings. Members of the community are also welcome to wear other coverings that appropriately shield the individual’s nose and mouth. Cloth face coverings can be worn for a day and then should be laundered before they are worn again. Having multiple face coverings will reduce the need for daily laundering. **Individuals who are in the [high-risk categories](#) are encouraged by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

to wear a disposable surgical face covering to reduce their exposure to the virus, not merely to prevent the spread of disease.

Instructions for making your own reusable cloth face covering can be found on the CDC website: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>).

Note on face shields: Current evidence indicates that face shields do NOT capture one's viral particles. They are not effective at decreasing disease transmission and cannot serve as a substitute for a face covering/mask. If individuals want to wear a face shield in addition to a face covering, ACHA is fully supportive.

4. Frequent Handwashing

All members of the community should wash their hands frequently throughout the day. Proper washing technique and the amount of time spent washing are most important.

Individuals should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; no special soap is needed to wash away the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

When soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer

(at least 60% alcohol) should be used. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout campus.

5. Frequent Cleaning and Maintaining a Healthy Campus Environment

In collaboration with staff from St. Moritz, we will be undertaking frequent cleaning and disinfecting of often-touched surfaces, including door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, hand railings, bathroom stalls and dining tables. Cleaning will occur at least daily or more frequently, as needed. The St. Moritz staff will be assigned to specific zones of campus. This will limit their number of contacts across campus as well as decrease the likelihood that they will spread the disease while moving from place to place across campus. We encourage students and employees to get to know the St. Moritz staff assigned to their residence halls or office buildings. We can work together to keep our spaces clean as well as build relationships with each other.

Use of shared objects in classes and labs should be limited as much as possible or cleaned between uses. The entire community will need to participate in cleaning and disinfecting shared spaces. Students and instructors will be asked to wipe down tables/desks before classes with disinfectant wipes provided by the College. When in class, students will be assigned to their

own equipment or provided with materials to clean shared equipment between uses, following the protocols developed by the department/program with ACHA. Computer labs with shared workstations are being taken offline to the greatest extent possible during the pandemic. Plans and protocols for shared items will be shared with students by the first day of classes.

6. Dining Services

In coordination with Parkhurst, dining services at Allegheny College have been reimaged and redesigned to decrease disease spread and to protect students and employees in our dining halls.

All meals are being served through takeaway service at least through the campus quarantine. Beyond that, students will potentially be able to eat in at Brooks Dining Hall or McKinley's with spaces reformatted to accommodate physical distancing.

Disposable/compostable food service items (e.g., utensils and dishes) should be used where possible. Where disposable items cannot be used, the reusable items should be handled by dining service staff wearing gloves and washed in hot water/dishwasher. Dining hall staff should wash their hands before removing gloves or directly after handling used food service items.

All of the self-service options at Brooks have been eliminated;

plated meals are being served, and buffets have been discontinued. Meals at McKinley's are available through a [new online ordering system](#) throughout the 2020–21 academic year. Both dining halls have extended their hours of operation and will rearrange seating to encourage physical distancing. Additionally, both dining halls monitor traffic flows throughout the facilities to decrease crowding. Physical barriers, such as plexiglass sneeze guards and partitions, have been installed in areas where it is difficult to maintain physical distance.

7. Travel

Given the high rates of COVID-19 transmission in Crawford County, it is essential for residential campus community members to remain on campus as much as possible during the Spring semester, for the safety of all. Once students return to campus (in either January or February), they are strongly discouraged from leaving campus to visit family and friends, both to protect themselves and to protect others.

- Any student who leaves campus overnight (including to students' primary residence), whether it is to visit family or to attend group events such as funerals and weddings, is required to quarantine in Edwards Hall upon return. The student will quarantine for four days and then get a test on day five (or the next

possible testing date after day five, as testing is not available every day).

- Quarantine will then continue until a negative result is returned or until 14 days have passed.

Employees who live outside of Crawford County may travel to/from campus. Given the saturation of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania, there is no benefit to preventing those from other counties from working on campus. Employees will be allowed to travel domestically (for personal or work-related reasons) and are expected to follow Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines for returning to the state after travel. If employees travel internationally, they **may be required** to quarantine and obtain a COVID-19 test before returning to work on campus; given the ever-changing guidelines, they should contact ACHA for guidance. We recommend that employees limit their non-business travel as much as possible. Employees who travel often as part of their job are encouraged to do so with **precautions**.

Once the College has completed the initial campus quarantine phase, students will be encouraged to stay on campus and use carry-out and delivery services available through local restaurants. If students do make trips off campus, they will be expected to adhere to the College's guidance related to physical distancing and face coverings.

If Allegheny College should subsequently return to a "campus quarantine" phase, all College-sponsored travel should again be suspended.

8. Community-based Research, Internship, Class Project and Volunteer Experiences

In an effort to protect both the Allegheny and Meadville communities in the midst of the pandemic, all embedded opportunities — such as internships, research assistantships, class projects, and volunteer positions — sponsored by the College will have to be completed remotely until a safe vaccine is available widely and our campus community is able to be vaccinated. No student completing College-sponsored work will be allowed to work physically off campus. This includes work-study positions off campus, Bonner and Davies opportunities, as well as departmental internships and research assistant positions. Students will not be allowed to work at either the Meadville Children's Center or the Meadville Cooperative Preschool.

Outdoor Service Saturday projects will be allowed if both the College and Crawford County show a low case positivity rate, community partners are supportive of the work, physical distancing can be maintained and face coverings are used by Allegheny

students, faculty and staff as well as community partners.

9. Visitors to Campus

Given that COVID-19 is easily transmitted from person-to-person and that our goal for this academic year is to provide a safe, residential liberal arts educational experience for our students, the number of visitors to campus will be limited.

Approved visitors include prospective students and their families, as well as candidates for faculty or administrative positions. Prospective students visiting campus should be accompanied by no more than two adults. Candidates interviewing for positions at the College will not be allowed to bring partners or children to the campus interview. Individuals who would normally come to campus, such as guest speakers or recruiters associated with Career Education, should be encouraged to coordinate virtual speaking and recruiting activities.

All visitors to campus will be required to adhere to the health and safety protocols in place.

During the 14-day campus quarantine, no visitors will be allowed on campus. Once that is completed, visitors must register before arriving on campus and will be required to complete

the daily health screen, just like members of the campus community. If visitors have a symptom of COVID-19, exposure to a confirmed case or recent international travel, they will not be allowed to visit campus until they have completed a 14-day quarantine. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>)

Athletics recruits visiting campus must register through the Admissions Office to ensure that prospective students and their families receive proper registration materials. ACHA will be responsible for collecting and protecting health screening data from visitors to campus. Once visitors have completed the health screen and are cleared to come to campus, the Admissions Office and appropriate coaches will escort them during their visit.

No overnight visitors will be allowed in College residence halls.

Parents/family members who come to campus to visit or pick up their students will not be allowed to enter the residence halls.

To limit potential exposure we are closing Allegheny facilities to the public. To that end, the following changes have been made: Pelletier Library is accessible by key card only; Grounds for Change coffee house has been closed for the academic

year; signs have been posted on all campus buildings that the facilities are for Allegheny community member use only; the Wise Center does not allow community memberships; and the Meadville Children's Center and Meadville Cooperative Preschool now have their own entrance/exit to the Odd Fellows Building and children at both facilities are prohibited from using any of the Allegheny facilities.

allegheny.edu/covid19

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE