

# Binghamton University Spring Semester 2021 Operating Plan / Addendum to Restarting Binghamton Plan

Binghamton University operated during the fall 2020 semester in accordance with the Restarting Binghamton Plan, which was approved by the Office of the SUNY Chancellor on July 1, 2020. The purpose of this document is to update the Restarting Binghamton Plan with operating details specific to the spring 2021 semester and with new opening procedures necessary to comply with SUNY guidance set forth in the *Academic Continuity and the Health and Safety of Students, Faculty and Staff Policy for the Winter and Spring Terms 2021*. Wherever there is a conflict between this document and the Restarting Binghamton Plan, this document shall control. Otherwise, the Restarting Binghamton Plan shall guide spring 2021 campus operations.

## **Spring Academic Calendar**

The spring 2021 semester will begin Thursday, Feb. 11, with all in-person final exams completed by May 21. There is an online exam period from May 24-26. This spring semester will not include a spring break. However, to help our students get some much-needed time to recharge during the spring semester, we have scheduled three nonconsecutive days off. These days were determined by the Student Association Executive Board in collaboration with the Student Association Congress. These days are Wednesday, March 17; Thursday, April 8; and Tuesday April 20.

Commencement: The campus is planning virtual commencement exercises for May 12-16. There are concurrent discussions with student shared governance groups about possible outdoor ceremonies that would comply with all applicable guidelines then in effect for such events. The campus will determine which model to use, including the possibility of a blended model, when more information is available.

## **Course Delivery**

Spring 2021 course delivery will utilize the same range of course delivery modes as outlined in our fall 2020 course delivery plan. Thirty-one percent of classes will have an in-person component. (The exact number will be posted on the website when available.) After reviewing the results of multiple student surveys about their learning experience in the fall 2020 semester, we have made a number of improvements. Among these are limiting the number of fully asynchronous courses and a greater emphasis on fostering student engagement with faculty and with other students regardless of the course delivery mode.

We have implemented a variety of feedback mechanisms and learning assessments to get student perspectives on their learning experience this past fall and spring, and we have closely reviewed the SUNY Student Survey results. After reviewing student perspectives and the SUNY

guidelines, outcomes have included targeted workshops by our Center for Learning and Teaching to foster student engagement both with the instructor and with each other, and careful review of teaching modality plans by deans' offices and department chairs in the fall course planning process to maximize student engagement and learning in courses across the University.

### International Students

In fall 2020, we mounted special course sections for international students and shifted class times in the schedule to accommodate them as much as possible. For spring, we have added remote-delivery sections that relate to specific international student learning needs and scheduled them at times that offer the best possible classroom times for students who are many time zones removed from New York. In particular, we have looked for ways to combine asynchronous with synchronous interaction, since our international students did not want to have fully asynchronous course offerings.

### Substantive Interaction

The University has implemented numerous workshops and communicated multiple times and through a variety of channels with all of our instructors about the need to communicate and respond promptly to students, and to engage in direct interactions. We have worked to significantly reduce the number of asynchronous courses offered in spring.

### Students with disabilities

As in any semester, our Services for Students with Disabilities Office has worked with students, faculty and other campus services (e.g., our Testing Center) to provide reasonable accommodations for students as needed. Support is readily coordinated through our Center for Learning and Teaching to assist faculty with things like video captioning, accessible content and more.

### Training for Instructional Technologies

Our Center for Learning and Teaching has coordinated many workshops throughout the summer and fall to assist faculty with pedagogical approaches that can maximize the effectiveness of their teaching in the new remote instruction environment. Many of these have included "first-person" experiences as instructors share peer to peer, sometimes in more discipline-specific settings. In addition, departments and colleges organize their own workshops or training sessions to address more localized questions or requests.

We have also provided new technology to departments and instructors across the University to assist them with implementing new approaches. For example, we distributed numerous tablet devices for faculty who are used to writing on a board in their classrooms so they could more effectively respond immediately to student learning needs in their classes. We also provide classroom technology assistants for those instructors requiring extra help managing the combined in-class and online teaching modality. Lastly, our instructional design team regularly interacts with SUNY's instructional support services

### Academic Interventions

Starting shortly after the spring disruption we have implemented a variety of monitoring

strategies to identify students who are struggling to succeed. These include direct requests that faculty provide updates on student progress, “early alerts” for students who are displaying academic difficulties and engagement as well as system-level analysis of student academic activities. Direct, proactive outreach efforts have been used as follow up with students who have been identified as at risk. These efforts have included units from across the divisions of Academic Affairs, Athletics and Student Affairs. In addition, we instituted a new type of direct academic advising appointments for new students that we will continue in spring.

## **Residential Life**

The campus expects to have residential occupancy at near the same occupancy levels as in the fall semester (80%).

### Quarantine/isolation space

The campus will maintain the same arrangements for quarantine and isolation housing as in fall when the quarantine and isolation space was always sufficient to accommodate demand. Like in the fall semester, the campus will continue to provide for possible quarantine overflow housing by arrangement with a neighboring hotel property with capacity to add up to 100 additional quarantine spaces.

### New student housing assignments

The campus will offer newly admitted students (deferred admits and transfers) on-campus housing and also expects to house students who opted out of fall housing but who wish to live on campus in the spring semester. Additional capacity for new residents is being provided by the return to service of a residence hall that had been undergoing renovation and by the usual attrition of residential students. New admits will have the opportunity to opt out of on-campus housing and will not be held to the first-year residence requirement.

### Move-in process

The campus will manage move-in in the same manner as in the fall semester opening such that all residential students must test negative at the campus testing center (which will again use a rapid test) prior to being permitted to enter residence halls. Each resident student (new or returning) will be scheduled to move in on a specific date between Feb. 5 and Feb. 10 so as to complete move-in prior to the start of classes on Feb. 11 and to build campus density gradually over several days. The campus has the capacity to complete move-in and testing over a shorter period of time in the event of winter weather disruptions and our schedule builds in that flexibility. Only students will be permitted to enter the residence halls following testing, meaning that parents will again not be permitted to enter residence halls to assist with move-in.

### Students from restricted states

The campus will manage new and returning students entering New York from restricted states in the same manner as in the fall semester except as follows: Residential students and off-campus

students who choose to quarantine at the campus-provided hotel will be provided with testing on arrival and on day four such that those who test negative twice per this testing protocol may be released from quarantine in accordance with the amended State of New York Guidelines. Hotel quarantine for such students will be offered over a range of dates, but will begin no earlier than Feb. 1.

### Rights and Responsibilities Document

Binghamton University has put in place special operating policies and procedures to comply with new public health standards and guidelines related to COVID-19. The University's primary focus in these policies is to protect the health and safety of students, faculty and staff while pursuing the educational mission of the University. We have developed a comprehensive set of rules that students must follow to keep themselves and others safe and will include them in the Housing License Addendum they sign, along with the [Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](#).

In addition, the campus provides a "Campus Living Guide" each semester that will be updated to include the information from the What Students Should Know Template. The guide will be available through the [MyBinghamton portal](#) (all students) and through Residential Life for on-campus students.

### Cleaning Protocols

Physical Facilities has deployed cleaning staff from third shift to first in order to enhance the cleaning of high-traffic areas and touch points across the campus, adhering to hygiene, cleaning and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health. In addition, in residence halls, suite and flat bathrooms will be cleaned once per week, scheduled to minimize staff and student interactions. Communal bathrooms in corridor-style housing will be cleaned daily. Cleaning in the residence halls will be performed in accordance with applicable CDC and NYS Department of Health guidelines, including the use of a disinfectant that is DEC- and EPA-registered for use against SARS-CoV-2.

Physical Facilities will provide cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., elevators, lobbies, building entrances, badge scanners, restrooms handrails, door handles).

All faculty, staff and students will receive a 2 oz. personal-size bottle of hand sanitizer that can be refilled at designated stations across campus. Employees should clean surfaces that are frequently touched. In addition, Physical Facilities has installed hand-sanitizing units at the main entrances to all buildings on campus and in multiple locations in high-traffic buildings.

### **COVID-19 Screening and Testing Protocols**

### Pre-arrival screening (all non-remote students)

All residential students and off-campus students who will have any on-campus classes or responsibilities will be screened for travel history, symptoms and exposure during the 14-day period prior to the Feb. 11 start of classes or student arrival on campus, whichever is earlier for resident students. All covered students will provide attestation that they have met all pre-arrival screening conditions via the [MyBinghamton portal](#). Failure to provide attestation during the screening period will prevent those students from accessing portal services and functions until providing the required information and no resident student will be permitted to complete move-in without the appropriate attestation.

### Pre-arrival screening (faculty/staff)

The campus will maintain its current daily screening tool for faculty and staff who are working on campus, which is delivered through the faculty/staff [MyBinghamton portal](#).

As negotiated by New York state, the faculty/staff surveillance testing program will continue through June 30, 2021, pursuant to the parameters outlined in the memorandum of understandings with all of the bargaining units.

### Pre-arrival precautionary quarantine (all non-remote students)

All students who will have any on-campus presence (resident and off campus) will attest that they have completed a seven-day precautionary quarantine prior to their return. Students will provide this attestation through the [MyBinghamton portal](#). Any student who fails to provide the required attestation in a timely manner will not be able to access any services and functions from the portal home page until doing so. Residential students will not be permitted to access move-in testing without such an attestation on record. The Surveillance Testing Center (STC) currently manages questions about testing exemptions. Students who believe they qualify for exceptions to the precautionary quarantine will be directed to the STC for review of their exception request.

### Arrival testing (all resident students)

Binghamton will repeat the arrival testing for all on-campus students in a manner that mirrors the fall semester arrival plan. The dates for move-in are Feb. 5 through Feb. 10. The one change to arrival testing for resident students is that any positive test result using an antigen test will be validated by a PCR test before requiring the student to enter isolation housing, in accordance with an agreement with the Broome County Department of Health.

### Arrival testing (all non-remote off campus students)

Off-campus students will be required to upload a negative test result within three to five days of their return, depending upon prevailing turn-around time for test results. A student who has tested positive in the previous 90 days will upload the test result/date. These uploads will be managed through a HIPAA compliant drop box. Off-campus students will validate that they have completed the required upload with their screening and precautionary quarantine attestation provided through the [MyBinghamton portal](#).

## Surveillance and diagnostic testing

Binghamton University will follow the CDC's guidance on tiered testing procedures (symptom screening, diagnostic testing and contact tracing).

As with the fall semester, the Surveillance Testing Center (STC) will operate beginning with the start of classes and continue throughout the semester, subject to state guidance.

Binghamton will continue to provide diagnostic testing for symptomatic students through the Decker Student Health Services Center. This service is now available to all symptomatic students whether they reside on or off campus.

Our surveillance testing program will test all resident (on-campus) students once per week and all non-resident (off-campus) students who have a non-incidental campus presence once per week. Employees with an on-campus presence will also be tested with similar frequency in keeping with their schedules. On campus students will be tested using an antigen test (rapid) that provides same hour results. Off-campus students and faculty/staff will be tested using pooled saliva tests from SUNY Upstate Medical Center.

Contact tracing will be handled in conjunction with the Broome County Health Department.

Binghamton University is currently operating its Surveillance Testing Center (STC) throughout the winter term for staff, faculty and students with any on-campus presence.

### **Types of Tests**

The Surveillance Testing Center (STC) will continue to provide testing for the Binghamton campus community using the BD-Veritor antigen test with the campus itself analyzing test kits and reporting the results. As was practiced in late fall, individuals who receive a positive antigen test at the STC will be offered a rapid molecular test at the Decker Student Health Services Center to confirm the necessity of isolation and appropriate contact tracing/ quarantine. In addition to antigen testing for surveillance, the SUNY Upstate saliva test (pooled testing) will continue to be used as a secondary process in the event additional supply is needed and for certain special populations (e.g., intercollegiate athletes). Diagnostic testing is performed at the Decker Student Health Service Center for all symptomatic students. The test used is a rapid, point of care molecular test by CUE Health.

The STC will operate a minimum of four days per week for 6-8 hours per day during the spring term. The STC tests students, faculty and staff with a significant on-campus presence. 2,000-2,500 individuals will be tested weekly at the STC, which represents approximately the average per week completed by the STC during the fall semester. The campus will continue to use a combination of random and targeted testing strategies, though based upon fall semester experience, we are shifting the balance in favor of more targeted testing of students.

Faculty led modeling of scenarios including mass random testing, diagnostic testing only and testing of contacts for each positive case has informed our planned approach, which is approved by our campus medical director after consultation with the Broome County Department of

Health. The campus will focus more upon prompt testing of presumed contacts (whether or not they are subject to quarantine order) of positive cases identified through diagnostic testing by Decker Student Health Services rather than continuing to expand random surveillance testing volume beyond fall semester levels. For example, a positive case on a particular residence hall floor and/or a member of a particular organization will trigger surveillance testing of all other students on the floor/members of that organization. Where advised, the targeted testing approach will also include repeat testing of the targeted individuals. In this fashion, some individuals may be tested more frequently and others less frequently. The campus surveillance testing sampling methodology will be guided on a rolling basis by campus team including public health faculty and other faculty and staff with relevant expertise. Important to the development of this surveillance testing plan was our experience in the fall semester where diagnostic testing yielded 61% of our positive results despite constituting only 8% of our total tests.

### **Use of University Spaces for Activities and Events**

Student Life will operate programming and support services in accordance with the Restarting Binghamton Plan. In an effort to continue to encourage outdoor recreation, the campus is adding a temporary outdoor ice-skating rink that will operate in accordance with state guidelines for such facilities. Student activities are primarily virtual other than activities that are inherently outdoor activities. As part of the fall plan, spaces used for indoor activities received air filtration upgrades and any such activities must be reserved through a process that validates the space is suitable for number of attendees with social distancing.

### **Employee Safety**

Plans to return employees safely with social distancing were previously submitted to each vice president and approved by President Harvey Stenger. These plans are in the process of being updated with the goal of returning employees in an organized, phased manner over the next few months. These plans will continually be reviewed in the coming months and adjusted in accordance with public health measures.

### **Face Coverings**

Anyone in a Binghamton University (or University affiliated) space (including buildings, grounds, shared laboratory areas, conference rooms, hallways, restrooms, elevators, parking structures, etc.) must wear a face covering or mask that covers both nose and mouth at all times even when six-foot social distancing exists. There are very few times when it could be acceptable to not wear a face covering: eating meals on campus, when alone in a private room, private office, private vehicle, cubicle space when appropriate social distancing can be maintained, walking in a more isolated area with no other people in proximity, or when exercising outside when appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

Any request for a medical, religious, or other accommodation to this policy should be reviewed on an individual basis in accordance with relevant laws and human resources.

- If you are alone in an office, you are not required to wear a face mask (unless you so desire). However, once you step out of your office into a common area, you must wear your face mask.
- If you sit in a cubicle environment and there are others within 6 feet of you, you must wear your face mask. However, if there are no co-workers in cubicles within 6 feet of you, you can treat it like being in an office and not wear a face mask. Again, once you step out of your cubicle and into a hallway or aisleway, you must wear a face mask.
- Employees may wear their own cloth face covering, which will help Binghamton University reduce the need to purchase additional masks, which are in short supply. The University will be issuing each employee two cloth face coverings. Cloth face coverings must only be worn for one day at a time and must be properly laundered before use again. Having a week's supply of cloth face coverings can help reduce the need for daily laundering.

## **Community Safety**

The campus will operate in accordance with this section of the Restarting Binghamton Plan with the following changes and additions:

[The Statement of Rights and Responsibilities](#) to which each non-remote student agrees through the confirmation of enrollment pathway will be updated to:

- (a) include student responsibilities to comply with University directives during any mandatory pause to in-person instruction.
- (b) cross-reference the *Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations*.

The campus will continue the Campus COVID Response Team launched in the mid-fall semester to positively reinforce COVID-19 guidelines compliance and to monitor “hot spots” for social distancing and face-covering compliance.

## **Mental health supports, services and referrals**

As a JED Campus\*, Binghamton University embraces student mental well-being and prioritizes comprehensive strategies to support and optimize student mental health. Resources and services are provided through a number of systemic pathways as student needs may present and/or be served in a variety of ways and through a number of different channels (e.g. University Counseling Center, psychiatry services through the Decker Student Health Services Center, mental health outreach through Health Promotion and Prevention Services, the CARE Team case management services, MSW interns embedded within Residential Life).

The need for clear communication on access to services and resources has never been more critical as students navigate college life during a global pandemic. The University promotes



services and resources through a number of channels (websites, printed media, social media, etc.) and continually updates information. One source can be found at <https://www.binghamton.edu/dean-of-students/help/index.html>. As we approach the spring 2021 semester, the University will update these channels, highlighting additional groups and peer support initiatives that have been developed specifically for COVID-19 response. An example of this would be support groups specifically for students in isolation/quarantine. The new SUNY initiatives for campus- and community-based mental health treatment and resources (e.g., ReachOut SUNY and Thriving Campus) will be included as details are learned. Promotion of the Crisis Text Line and QPR suicide prevention training for students, faculty and staff has and will continue.

### **Reporting of Cases**

The campus will report daily COVID-related information to the SUNY COVID-19 Tracker and maintain a campus dashboard (<https://www.binghamton.edu/restarting-binghamton/covid-19-dashboard.html>) that will be consistent with the SUNY Tracker as to the data fields in common.

*\* JED Campus is a signature program of The JED Foundation (JED) designed to guide schools through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, program and policy development with customized support to build upon existing student mental health, substance use and suicide prevention efforts.*