

FAQs Faculty Teams Live Event – The Student Experience
July 9, 2020

Questions related to Faculty Issues:

What support will UVM provide to faculty with young children if preschools and public schools are forced to close during the semester, and this impacts their capacity to teach? In that case, will faculty be allowed to move to teaching remotely if their courses are in-person or hybrid?

If preschools and public schools are closed, deans will work with chairs to provide appropriate additional flexibility where needed to faculty affected by these closures, including adjusting delivery mode for courses.

How will the administration work with United Academics surrounding terms and conditions of employment that are related to teaching, learning, and advising? How will the additional workload of teaching online, remote, and hybrid and the increased demand on faculty for student advising be tracked and compensated?

The administration has entered into impact bargaining with United Academics regarding decisions that impact terms and conditions of employment.

If in-person or hybrid classes suddenly need to go remote due to a spike in cases, how long will faculty be given to transition their course to remote?

Vermont is requiring all institutions of higher education to develop a contingency plan that will include specific metrics and decision points for a shift to fully remote learning, with or without closure of other campus facilities. Due to the nature of the pandemic, conditions for such a closure may emerge quickly, in which case faculty will need to move to remote learning just as quickly. When finalized, this contingency plan will be made available to campus, allowing faculty to understand the decision points for a move to remote instruction and make plans accordingly during the semester.

If the university fails to make an in-person classroom situation safe, is it the right of the faculty member to protect themselves and their students by moving to remote?

UVM will meet all state requirements for safe in-person instruction in higher education to protect the health and safety of students and faculty in classrooms.

What happens to the class(es) an instructor teaches if they fall ill with the virus?

This is being discussed with United Academics. But in general, as in any semester, if a faculty member is unable to teach for any reason, chairs and colleagues can assist in organizing and providing coverage for the faculty member's classes.

Questions regarding Students:

**Who is communicating with graduate students regarding quarantine and required testing?
Will graduate students be offered a version of the “at-home” option?**

The Graduate College is preparing a comprehensive communication to graduate students that will offer information on testing, quarantine, and remote instructional options. It is important to note that many UVM graduate programs have in-person experiences as part of accreditation or licensure requirements. The Graduate College will work with programs and individual students to help graduate students make decisions regarding the fall semester.

Has a decision been made about varsity and club sports programs?

Athletics is working with the NCAA and America East conference to decide how athletic programs will need to be altered to comply with safety guidance

Club Sports will follow similar safety guidelines as Varsity sports but club sports will not be allowed to travel outside of Vermont.

Are we discussing with students how to engage safely in romantic and sexual activities?

Living Well does this work with students on an ongoing basis, and this year is including specific information on sexual health that takes into account the conditions of the pandemic.

Are students being told that laptops are expected?

All first-year students are required to have a laptop, and this requirement as well as computer specs have been provided to all incoming students. Other students will be strongly encouraged to bring a laptop, and there is a process for students who cannot afford a laptop to request assistance.. The UVM Libraries have submitted a reopening plan for approval under which some public terminals will be available to all students. Students will be required to sanitize keyboards after each use.

**Is UVM still requiring freshman and sophomores to live on campus? Have waivers been given to those students who feel off-campus housing is a safer option for them?
Can local first years/sophomores live at home (with their families) but not do the "at home" option, that is, attend in-person classes, go to the library, etc.? if a sophomore elects to return to Burlington for on-campus instruction, can that student live off-campus?**

First-year and second-year students are required to live on campus for 4 contiguous semesters unless they have selected the “at home” option. For first and second year students who do not

elect the at home option, on campus-residency requirements are still in place unless they have a release from Residential Life.

Could you respond to this type of scenario: A group of 10 graduate students who live off campus have a dinner party--with friends that they feel safe with who are part of their pod. Would this violate the green/gold promise? It just feels like there are some gray areas where students have dual identities and in this scenario they very much might be well within VT guidelines for group gathering but might be not in compliance with UVM?

The Green and Gold Promise provisions are straightforward. If students have questions, they can contact Student Affairs.

How are you handling the fraternities and sororities? How extensive is UVM's disciplinary power over sororities and fraternities?

UVM is working closely with fraternities and sororities, which will also be bound by the Green and Gold promise. These groups also must abide by guidelines put in place by their national organizations.

How are we dealing with students who travel for essential and non-essential reasons? How are you defining "essential travel"?

There will be no travel outside Vermont for any co-curricular student activities, with the possible exception of some varsity sports although that is still under discussion with the NCAA. In some cases, travel required for program purposes may be allowed with approval from a Dean's Office with notification of the Provost's Office. Specific guidelines regarding undergraduate, graduate, and medical student travel for Fall 2020 will be released shortly.

How will dining halls work?

Information on health and safety protocols for the dining halls is outlined in [this memo](#) from July 2: Staff and students will be required to wear masks, except when eating. Staff will be sanitizing and disinfecting dining spaces more frequently, including closing residential dining halls for one hour between meal periods to deeply sanitize spaces. Seating will be re-configured and the flow of traffic will be adjusted in order to abide by social distancing requirements. New technology, including touchless pay, and expanded mobile ordering and delivery will be used to every extent possible.

In Nursing, there is a large concern regarding our students transmitting COVID-19 to vulnerable patients. Nursing students will be working with sick patients regularly if these patients were to get COVID-19 it would undoubtedly kill them. How does the University plan to mitigate this risk?

The governor expects everyone to follow all the social distancing requirements being laid out in the state's [return to campus plan](#) and will be wearing masks. Nursing students should work with their Chair and Vice Chair for Undergraduate Nursing Education to ensure all safety protocols and measures are being implemented. If clinical experiences are off-site at health care facilities

or the hospital, the Vermont Department of Health has requirements for these sites which are students are expected to follow.

I'm wondering if there is an additional investment being made in social emotional health resources for students (e.g. more mental health counseling, programming to increase social connection)? A lot of the recent communication to students (e.g. green and gold promise) has a heavy emphasis on consequences and what may happen to students if they don't follow expectations. What plans are being made to create a more positive campus atmosphere and wrap around students in supportive and restorative ways?

The Student Experience Working Group is addressing all students concerns. They are working on a marketing campaign to ensure positive behavior. We will offer a robust combination of mental and primary care services to ensure students have access to address their needs and concerns.

If our goal is to keep all in the UVM community safe, why are we not cancelling the Labor Day holiday? It seems better to keep students on campus than heading elsewhere.

Unlike fall break, Labor Day is national holiday and a day where the university is officially closed. Students will be reminded that they are expected to remain local and continue following the Green and Gold Promise.

If students choose to take classes remotely and are worldwide in location (as in CEMS), does this not mean they must be asynchronous?

Some at-home students will be in earlier time zones, while others will be in later time zones. With careful planning, we expect at-home students to be able to find a selection of both asynchronous online classes and remote classes that will fall within normal waking hours. For a range of reasons, including specific program requirements, not all at-home students will be able to take the same selection of courses as if they were on campus, and for some at-home may not be a good option.

If there is a student who has an ADA accommodation that allows them to *not* wear a mask, then is the remote-learning option already set up as an accommodation?

ADA guidelines require reasonable accommodation. SAS will work with the student and the faculty member to explore possible accommodations. In some cases, a specific accommodation may not be available to a student in a specific class.

How will students be held accountable for social distancing such as not going to parties etc.?

Students are expected to comply with the Green and Gold Promise. The UVMStrong Student Experience Working Group is working on ways to promote this understanding and to establish sanctions for violations of the promise.

Many off campus students (both undergrads and grads) have been living continuously in Burlington, and live in homes with more than 4 students. Many students have been tested due to work requirements and have already established social circles of friends in pods that they are regularly spending time with. How will you navigate this as far as whether they would be considered in compliance with green/gold promise (e.g. if having a gathering at a private residence)?

We are engaging in outreach to our off-campus students through the Student and Community Relations Office, and are working closely with our community partners in Burlington to ensure the expected behavior is being followed.

What is UVM doing for students on F1 and M1 visas given the current rulings?

The Office of International Education is providing support and advising to all international students in response to developing guidance on new requirements for F1 and M1 visa holders. We are ensuring that all international students have the support they need to be in compliance with visa rules if they are in the United States, and to make plans for instruction if they are currently outside the United States. All student questions about how to maintain their visa status or how choosing an at-home option may affect their visa status should be directed to InternationalStudents@uvm.edu.

Will guidance be issued to club advisors?

Yes. SGA and Student Life will jointly develop guidance and education for club advisors and student leaders of clubs and organizations.

Will remote students be allowed to join campus clubs?

At-home students will be able to join clubs and participate in activities remotely.

Questions regarding Masks and Face Shields:

Are face shields already an acceptable alternative to face masks for those of us already back doing research? Are these face shields provided/going to be provided? What is the current thinking on face shields as an alternative to masking for faculty in the classroom?

Evidence shows that face shields, along with social distancing, offer very good protection against the virus, although not as good as masking and a face shield. For faculty who prefer teaching in a face shield, additional protections such as separation from students through additional physical distance or a physical barrier will be part of classroom setups. All faculty, staff, and students, will be issued reusable face coverings. We are planning to make face shields available to all faculty.

Are students required to wear a mask in labs if they can maintain social distance and if access to the lab is limited?

All labs are required to submit a lab safety plan prior to resuming all on campus activities. These include plans for maintaining social distancing and other prevention activities. All plans must comply with Vermont Department of Health guidelines and VOSHA requirements. VOSHA requires that masks be worn in addition to social distancing if two or more people are in a space.

Can faculty enforce wearing masks during lectures? Will we have disposable masks available to give to students who forget their masks? If a student comes to an in-person class without a mask, they have already exposed fellow students and faculty in the room, how long will the class then need to quarantine before coming back together in person? Will we have disposable masks available to give to students who forget their masks?

Yes, faculty can enforce students wearing a mask during lectures. Faculty can report this noncompliance to the COVID Center Hotline or the Student Conduct Office. Students are required to wear masks any time they are outside of their rooms. They should not be on campus without a mask, and faculty can enforce this rule by asking the student to put on their mask or leave the room. We do not want to provide disposable masks in classrooms, as students should not have arrived on campus unmasked or continued to the classroom without a mask.

Can we have n95 masks to protect against aerosols?

Procedural masks such as N95 masks are critical to the medical supply chain and will not be given to faculty unless required for specific educational purposes. Cloth face coverings will be supplied to all faculty, staff, and students who will be on campus.

Please describe the specs of the masks that will be provided to students and faculty.

The face coverings provided to students, faculty, and staff will be reusable, washable face coverings with multiple layers of fabric.

Questions regarding Quarantine:

Q: How will students/families know if they should quarantine?

A: An [interactive tool](#) has been developed to guide people through a series of questions related to their unique circumstance and determine their quarantine responsibilities and options. It will be updated weekly as new information is released.

How is the university going to monitor and confirm where students are coming from and whether they properly quarantine upon or prior to arrival?

All students will need to follow Vermont state guidelines regarding quarantining, depending on where they are arriving from and how they traveled to campus.

If I am exposed to a positive student in class and must go into quarantine, will UVM provide safe hotel accommodations for me to protect my family?

By following the safety precautions required in each classroom, exposure should not be a problem. Everyone should be masked and socially distanced, classrooms are disinfected and daily health screenings are required. Faculty will be expected to self-quarantine in their homes.

Questions on Testing:

There were several questions regarding testing. We are currently working on a testing protocol.

How will students living off campus be connected to the testing system?

There will be three sites on campus for testing where off-campus students can be tested. We are also setting up a testing site in Burlington specifically for off-campus students.

Where it is possible that people with an infection can still test negative within the first few days after contracting the virus, how do we address the issue of spread of the virus BEFORE a positive test is received?

False negatives are a possibility for most viral infections in very early acute phases of the infection, though prior SARS-COV testing showed the ability of PCR testing to accurately diagnose 80% of cases within the first 3 days, even where patients were entirely asymptomatic. In addition, where viral loads remain too low to detect, transmission potential is also likely to be very low. Where viral loads are low and likely infection is diminished, safety measures like social distancing, masking and cleaning that are designed to prevent infection from fully infected persons are likely to be adequate.

As faculty, will we be informed when one of our students or advisees tests positive? Conversely, when faculty and/or staff test positive, will students be informed? What ACTIONS does a positive test trigger?

On the issue of notification, there are medical privacy issues, but contact tracing will be done for those who test positive.

Anyone who tests positive will be directed to self-isolate.

Will faculty/lecturers engaged in in-person teaching be required to be tested as well and with what frequency? Will testing be available for faculty? Will testing be available for staff?

Testing is not required of faculty and staff. We are exploring making available on campus a testing option for faculty and staff that have symptoms that indicate they may have COVID-19.

Questions on Contact Tracing:

There were also several questions related to contact tracing. The process is described below.

Student Health Services (SHS) will be leading the contact tracing efforts at UVM in partnership with VDH. SHS has been doing this since March. SHS interviews the faculty, staff or student to determine the extent of their contacts and places they have been on campus to determine if any cleaning or sanitization is required. SHS will contact individuals that were in contact with the person who is positive and interview them to determine if there is a need for them to quarantine or be tested.

Does UVM have apps for contact tracing?

An App for daily health checks is currently being considered. An App for contact tracing is being explored, though no decision has been made.

Will the university provide weekly updates on % of students tested and number of positive tests on campus?

The university will provide weekly counts of net new positive cases each Thursday, broken down by: on-campus students, off-campus students, faculty, and staff.

Other Questions:

How will we maintain a culture of mutual care, civility, and compliance with the Green and Gold promise and the state-required affirmations to follow safety protocols required by the state?

The Green and Gold Promise emphasizes the need to take actions to protect ourselves and all members of our community. The UVM Strong Student Experience Working Group is working on ways to promote this understanding and compliance with the Green and Gold Promise. They are also working to establish sanctions for violations of the promise. The university also is working with faculty and staff to develop clear guidelines.

Have any outdoor spaces for gathering classes or groups been identified? Has there been any discussion about how to give classes or groups access or to reserve an outdoor space while the weather is mild enough?

While outdoor spaces/tents were evaluated and considered as additional classroom spaces, variability in weather conditions limit the practicality of these as a solution for the entire semester. We are considering using tents for operational needs such as testing.

How are classrooms going to be cleaned between classes and who will be responsible for cleaning?

Students will be asked to wipe down their seating area after class, and faculty will be asked to wipe down any areas they use. All classrooms will have hand sanitizer stations and disposable disinfectant wipes. Physical plant will do overnight cleaning.

Who is on the medical and public health group of consultants to UVMStrong to which Gary Derr referred?

There are several medical and health consultants including but not limited to Dr. Jan Carney, Dr. Michelle Paavola, Dr. Beth Kirkpatrick, Dr. Tim Lahey, and Dr. Debra Leonard.

In that CDC guidelines are becoming increasingly politicized, veering away from science and from placing priority on public health, what set of more science-based and public-health focused guidelines will UVM utilize?

UVM follows the CDC guidelines and the Governor's orders for the state of Vermont.

NOTE: We have received inquiries regarding ventilation systems in our many buildings on campus. Physical Plant has been directed to make it a top priority to ensure that all systems are working at maximum efficiency.