

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Last month, President Reveley announced the formation of the [University's COVID-19 Task Force](#) to help advise Longwood's leadership on issues related to re-opening in the fall.

Currently, members of this group, in consultation with others around campus, are hard at work on research and scenario-planning related to their respective areas. If you have thoughts, ideas, or concerns related to next semester, I encourage you to reach out to one of them or to me.

I wanted to share an update regarding this ongoing planning work and the timeline of what you can expect over the next few weeks.

In recent days, I know there has been news coverage regarding the preliminary plans of some institutions around the country for re-opening in person. We recognize how eager the campus community is to understand better how all this will look at Longwood. One challenge for all of higher education is that we are only now starting to see important guidance and direction that we will have to take into account.

Just in the last few days, the American College Health Association and the Centers for Disease Control have begun issuing preliminary guidance to college campuses for how to re-open safely. We also now expect by early June to receive critical guidance and possibly formal direction from the Commonwealth to Virginia's colleges and universities, public and private. Helpfully, President Reveley is one of just several presidents closely involved in this work as a member of the state's COVID-19 Education task force. We are also in close contact with Hampden-Sydney regarding coordination and collaboration.

There are some key baseline principles underlying all of Longwood's planning work, which I hope will give you a helpful sense of the direction we are headed.

- We remain committed to re-opening campus for in-person learning as scheduled, with new students arriving August 20. We are working on a number of tools, practices and policies that will give flexibility should we need to temporarily adjust in response to circumstances over the course of the semester and to allow students to receive the best experience that our faculty and staff can provide.
- Planning by Longwood and the Commonwealth recognizes traditional college-age students as a population group are at statistically low risk of severe outcomes should

they contract COVID-19, but faculty and staff are at higher risk as a group, and some faculty/staff as well as broader community members are at particularly elevated risk. Every aspect of Longwood's plans will recognize this.

- Social distancing is an important tool in mitigating spread of COVID-19 in a community. It cannot be made absolute, but it will be a fact of life on campus next year. In terms of housing, we are moving forward with plans to place more students into single rooms and achieve greater spacing. We are working with Aramark on dining adjustments. In classroom space, a complex effort is underway to ensure appropriate distancing, including the use of larger spaces, and repurposing larger spaces that have not traditionally been used as classrooms. Other adjustments, including to classroom layouts and scheduling, are also under careful consideration, informed by important feedback from faculty.
- Testing, monitoring and protocols for responding to cases are extremely important, though the testing landscape nationally remains complicated and uncertain. We are in close, detailed communication with the Virginia Department of Health. We expect over the next few weeks to learn precisely what role VDH and the Commonwealth will play, at which point our plans can move forward more clearly.

Here is what you can expect from Longwood in terms of the timeline and communication.

By mid-June, with the Commonwealth's guidance in place, we hope to share with the campus community, including students and families, a more detailed picture of what to expect on campus this fall. We will address social distancing in housing, dining and classroom settings; testing for students and faculty/staff; response plans if and when cases appear in our community; and policies for students and employees that encourage positive public health behavior and promote safety. We will then use the rest of June and July to finalize and communicate finer details.

Also over the next few weeks, there will be guidance from the state that will affect issues such as campus access, telework and the re-opening of facilities, along with associated precautions. We will communicate on these matters as soon as we have news to report.

In closing, I want to thank you for patience in the midst of this great challenge and for understanding that we do not yet have all the answers. Please be assured that Longwood is very much involved in the statewide conversation, and that here on campus the wheels are in motion across the University to prepare us flexibly and responsibly for the fall semester. Our goal is to open safely in a way our students and the wider world urgently need, with the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff foremost in all planning.

Again, please let us know if you have any questions, ideas, or concerns.

Thanks,

Justin Pope
Vice President and Chief of Staff

From: [Stokes, Kay](#)
To: [All Faculty, Staff & Contract Employees](#)
Cc: [Stokes, Kay](#)
Subject: Fw: Covid-19 Task Force Announcement
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020 1:17:43 PM

Dear Faculty and Staff,

On behalf of President Reveley, I'm sharing with you the announcement below, which is also being posted today [here](#) on the Longwood website and social media.

Thank you,
Kay Stokes

April 16, 2020

Longwood announces leadership team to help prepare campus to re-open safely this fall

FARMVILLE, Va.— President W. Taylor Reveley IV announced Thursday the creation of a cross-university team of leaders and experts to look at all aspects of campus life to help Longwood prepare to safely re-open for in-person learning in the upcoming fall semester.

“Right now, we remain in the heart of a serious national crisis that is affecting countless families, and has been felt at every college campus,” Reveley said. “But as we push through this phase, like every sector of society, we’re already beginning to think about how to get safely back up and running again. With our setting, structure and experienced leadership, Longwood is well positioned to find our way back to familiar routines of in-person learning this fall, while taking prudent steps to ensure public health.

“This group will build on the outstanding work of our Incident Command Team, which has helped us navigate our response this spring to the national Covid-19 outbreak, and tap their expertise as well as broader guidance,” Reveley said. “They will research and report back to the President’s Council with creative and informed recommendations covering every aspect of campus life—from academics to housing and dining arrangements to health practices around testing and responding if cases emerge.”

The Covid-19 Planning team will also survey parents, students and university stakeholders to garner feedback, questions and concerns as it prepares recommendations. The group will work closely with community leaders, local healthcare providers and the Virginia Department of Health.

“In a few months, we’ll live in a world where the virus has subsided but not been eliminated,” Reveley continued. “We cannot be exactly sure what that will look like on campus, and public health will be our paramount consideration. But so much is at stake for our students and our community in college life returning. I am confident Longwood will be a leader when it comes to safely navigating this challenge.”

The group will include:

- University Chief of Staff and Vice President Justin Pope
- Associate Vice President of Wellness Matt McGregor

Associate Provost/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs David Shoenthal

- Incoming University Police Chief Doug Mooney
- Associate Vice President for Operations and Services Lori Blackwood (MBA '17)
- Moton Museum Executive Director and Centra Southside Community Hospital Board Member Cameron Patterson '10
- Assistant Vice President for Communications Matthew McWilliams

McGregor, who oversees student health, will also represent the Incident Command Team, which he leads. The Incident Command Team includes representatives of Longwood's offices of Environmental Health and Safety, Emergency Management, Housing, Residential and Commuter Life, Facilities, and the University Health Center.

“On the other side of this, we’ll all appreciate that much more the opportunity to be together in-person on Longwood’s residential campus,” said Vice President for Student Affairs Tim Pierson. “Campus may need to feel a little different in some ways next fall, but I’m confident that with the help of this group we can find the right balance, and return to a more familiar Longwood.”

Anyone with questions about Longwood’s response to the Covid-19 outbreak can email questions@longwood.edu.