

MUS Healthy Fall 2020: Planning Guidelines for Campuses



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June 1, 2020

Dear Montana University System Community,

We hope this letter finds you well and excited for a return to on-campus instruction and student life across the Montana University System for the Fall 2020 semester.

In close collaboration with public health officials at the state and local levels, the MUS Healthy Fall 2020 Task Force has produced a handbook of Fall 2020 Planning Guidelines that serve as a basic blueprint for campuses as they craft more detailed plans for a high-quality experience that also mitigates health and safety risks for students, employees, and surrounding communities.

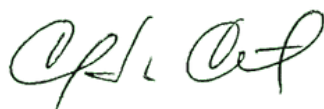
The guidance offered here is the result of extensive research and intensive discussion. The Task Force solicited feedback from campus experts, as well as a broader population of employees, students, and administrators across the MUS. Importantly, the guidelines have been crafted with, and reviewed by, state public health officials from Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services.

While it is important to acknowledge that public health risk factors cannot be entirely eliminated even in the best of times, we are confident that this handbook provides campuses with the clear planning protocols they need to safely and enthusiastically welcome students back for the kind of academic and extra-curricular experience that has distinguished our campuses for decades and - in some cases - more than a century.

With these guidelines in place, we have developed the required architecture for campuses to enter the next phase of planning for a Healthy Fall 2020. As the public health situation in Montana evolves, we will continue to work together and monitor any challenges and opportunities that arise and any adjustments that need to be made.

Many thanks to the task force members, public health officials, and all those who participated in the development of these guidelines. We all look forward to the end of the summer when we can welcome students back for a successful semester at all of our Montana University System campuses.

Sincerely,



Clayton T. Christian
Commissioner of Higher Education
Montana University System



Dr. Greg Holzman
State Medical Officer
Montana Department of Public
Health & Human Services



Introduction

The Montana University System (MUS) Healthy Fall 2020 Task Force has developed planning guidelines for MUS campuses as they prepare for on-campus academic and student life during the Fall 2020 semester and beyond. The MUS intent to return to campus for the Fall 2020 semester is based on assessments of the current and projected public health threat posed to Montana by COVID-19 and extensive communication with public health officials and other leaders across Montana.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the Healthy Fall 2020 Task Force will continue to communicate with public health officials and assess the public health risk from COVID-19. We encourage campuses to develop contingency plans in all areas that are adaptable to decreased or increased public health risk environments.

The planning guidelines presented in this document do not represent an operational plan in itself; campuses should instead use these guidelines as a framework within which they can develop their own more detailed and tailored plan for the Fall 2020 semester. As such, the guidelines can be thought of as a mid-altitude planning checklist – granular enough to provide useful direction, but not meant to replace the kind of context-sensitive planning that can only emerge at the campus level. As campuses develop their specific operational plans, we encourage an inclusive process that reflects input from administration, employees, students, local public health officials, and other community partners.

Campuses will plan together for the Fall 2020 semester under the broad authority and responsibility of the Board of Regents (BOR) to supervise and manage the MUS, and with a charge from the BOR to prioritize health and safety measures, while continuing to effectively serve their students, their communities, and the State of Montana.

The guidelines are separated into two categories: Integrated Guidelines and Planning Areas. Integrated Guidelines represent protocols, policies, and considerations that MUS campuses should account for as they develop strategies in any Planning Area. Planning Areas represent the different operational imperatives across the MUS; they account for the things that our institutions do. Each Planning Area identifies essential items that campuses must address as they build their Healthy Fall 2020 plan. It is important to note that some Planning Areas do not apply to certain campuses. For example, some of our two-year campuses do not provide housing in the manner represented in this document. Each Planning Area also includes planning considerations, or those items that campuses are encouraged, though not required, to address in their Healthy Fall 2020 plans.

Integrated Guidelines

Health and Safety Protocols: Campuses will promote safety, cleaning, and social distancing policies as defined by local, state, and federal public health authorities. Campuses should strongly encourage use of face coverings when social distancing is not possible. In planning and in communication with returning students and employees, campuses need to explicitly acknowledge that there are some increased risks associated with a return to living, learning, and working on campus. Reasonable accommodations such as tele-work and remote learning will be made for students, employees, or campus visitors who are at an increased risk. Campuses will coordinate with OCHE to establish any needed guidelines for use of personal safety supplies, cleaning supplies, and health monitoring equipment.

Public Health Testing & Tracing Protocols: Campuses will work to support the monitoring, testing, and tracing efforts as well as quarantine and isolation protocols advised by their local and state public health authorities. Campuses will collaborate, share information, and review their plans for repopulating campus with local public health officials. In coordination with local public health officials, campuses will develop mitigation strategies to reduce health risks to students, employees, and communities.

Budgetary Considerations: While additional investment may be required in certain areas, all planning should be mindful of our budgetary constraints and be designed to minimize costs. Whenever possible, strategies should move towards budget-neutral or budget-savings strategies. For strategies that do require additional resources, campuses should primarily rely on resource re-allocation or identification of new revenue that will cover expenses. For funds from FEMA Public Assistance, the CARES Act, or insurance, campuses will coordinate with OCHE to ensure appropriate policies are followed.

Leveraging Technology: In-person instruction, student life, and campus operations should be enhanced, whenever possible, by use of technology to mitigate health and contagion risks and to more easily facilitate possible transitions between in-person and remote operations and instruction. A shared services approach should be prioritized when pursuing new technologies.

Communication: Campuses will develop communications plans that effectively and quickly share new policies, schedules, health and safety standards, and other information with students, employees, and communities. The OCHE Communications Director and campus communities, include students and their families, should be informed of significant changes before they are announced to the broader public.

Travel: In all operational areas, policies for all *university-sponsored or affiliated travel* (essential, non-essential, international, out-of-state, in-state, student, employee, student group, athletic, etc.) will be developed in coordination with OCHE in accordance with state and federal (CDC, US Department of State, etc.) guidelines. In coordination with OCHE and following the guidance of state and federal travel guidelines, all campuses will make recommendations about the *personal travel* of students and employees.

Accessibility & Privacy: Alterations to existing instruction, campus life, and operations should continue to comply with state and federal accessibility guidelines (IDEA, ADA, etc.) and should continue to adhere to federal privacy requirements (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.).

Deliver Quality Instruction

Essential Items:

- Establish a classroom occupancy, traffic flow, and course scheduling plan that minimizes health risks associated with in-person instruction.
- Where possible, work with faculty to develop flexible instructional plans that leverage instructional technology, encourage blended delivery, and encourage smaller groups for in-person class meetings.
- Work with faculty to develop a plan for quickly transitioning to remote delivery during the semester should conditions warrant.
- Provide training and resources to help faculty maximize use of learning technologies and blended course delivery.
- Establish tools and practices to assess student learning in remote, blended, or other delivery formats.
- To the greatest extent possible, develop a technological infrastructure (e.g. course scheduling, LMS shells, etc.) that can transition between remote and in-person delivery.
- Account for impacts on federal and state compliance requirements (accessibility, financial aid, Veteran's services, etc.) resulting from alterations to instruction models and/or physical learning spaces and identify how compliance requirements in each area will be met.
- Make decisions about experiential learning (e.g. internships, clinical work, student teaching in K-12 settings, education abroad, etc.) based on an assessment of: health risks at destination/learning site, compatible approaches by external partners, size of learning group, equipment needs, health risks associated with required transportation, and the extent to which the experience is essential (for accreditation, etc.) to the program of study.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider incentives that promote faculty engagement in training/professional development activities (note: consult with relevant campus HR and faculty associations, collective bargaining agreements, and OCHE HR regarding faculty work during "off contract" periods).
- Consider developing a strategy that addresses equity gaps that may be exacerbated by increased reliance on remote or technology-enabled delivery modes.
- Consider targeted mental health and wellness plans for faculty, instructional staff, and students who may seek support in adjusting to new campus rhythms under COVID-19.
- Consider greater tracking of classroom attendance and/or promoting consistent seating arrangements to assist public health authorities in contact tracing in the event of exposure.
- Consider any community health risks and community engagement benefits of delivering in-person Lifelong Learning, Extension, and Community Outreach programming.

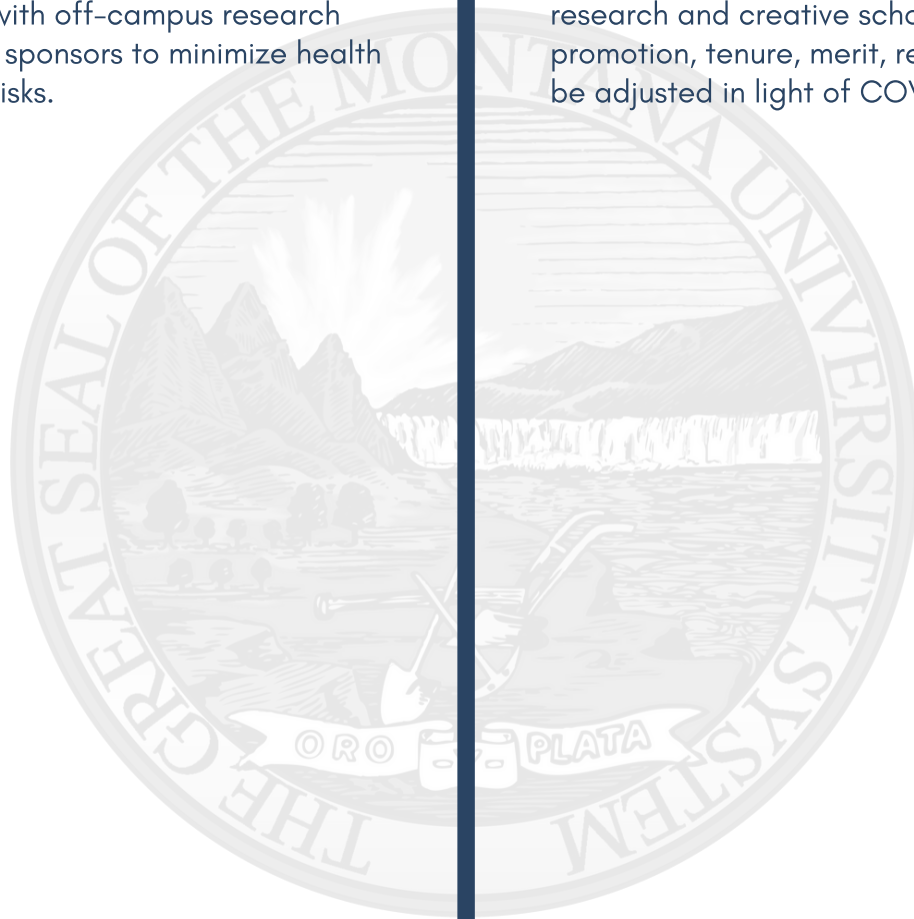
Conduct Research & Creative Scholarship

Essential Items:

- Establish clear protocols for moving between Research Operation Levels 0-4.
- Develop standard operating procedures and protocols for cleaning, social distancing, and traffic flow in lab/workspaces. Particular attention should be given to cleaning and usage of shared lab/workspace equipment.
- Design meetings with off-campus research collaborators and sponsors to minimize health and transmission risks.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider working with principal investigators and funding agencies to amend allowable grant expenditures to include additional health and safety measures that will mitigate risks associated with conducting research and creative scholarship.
- Consider if, and how, campus evaluation of research and creative scholarship (e.g. for promotion, tenure, merit, relevant awards) might be adjusted in light of COVID-19 disruption.



Provide Student Housing

Essential Items:

- Develop an occupancy plan for residence halls to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This plan should be completed in coordination with university emergency management, university health professionals, and county public health officials.
- Follow campus cleaning procedures for all common areas (e.g. shared restrooms, study areas, laundry rooms, vending machines, etc.), with special attention to high-touch surfaces.
- Conduct training on public health measures and signs/symptoms of COVID-19 for all live-in professionals, graduate hall directors, residence advisors, and others in similar roles.
- Develop a plan, including but not limited to signage and traffic flow markings, to promote social distancing in high occupancy or confined areas within residence halls (e.g. elevators, stairs, and entrances).
- Re-configure seating in common areas to ensure proper social distancing.
- Build a “welcome back to campus” plan that establishes staggered move-in dates/times, promotes social distancing, and accommodates smaller group orientation sessions.
- Develop a plan to address any relevant quarantine or health-related requirements for out-of-state students returning to residence halls. This plan should align with statewide requirements and be completed in coordination with university emergency management, university health professionals, and county public health officials.
- Develop a plan for the quarantine and isolation of campus residents awaiting COVID-19 test results, after testing positive for COVID-19, or when directed to quarantine by public health officials. Whether on campus or off campus, isolation rooms should:
 - Be physically separated from other residential student rooms
 - Have private bathroom facilities and be stocked with a thermometer, sanitizing wipes, tissues, soap, hand sanitizer, and toiletries.
 - Where possible, make accessible additional equipment for monitoring vital signs (e.g. pulse oximeters).
 - Be pre-identified and available to accommodate an increase in need.
 - Be accessible for food delivery from campus food service or other arranged delivery.
 - Have connectivity that allows students to continue academic study through remote access whenever possible.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider plans to limit residence hall access and visitation policies.
- Consider travel limitations for students that resemble those for employees (for both school-related travel and personal travel).
- Consider alternate living arrangements for students who self-identify as having significant health issues and/or as immuno-compromised.
- Consider adjusting desk operations in residence halls to reduce contact/touch, such as package delivery, mail distribution, etc.
- Consider a training program for residential staff that focuses on how to manage conflicts between students over adherence to COVID-19 protocols, and what to do if someone tests positive for COVID-19.

Provide Food Services

Essential Items:

- Establish hours of operation that allow for facility occupancy that meets social distancing guidelines and allows proper cleaning and sanitation. Specific approaches should draw from established CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community>) and ACHA (<https://www.acha.org/COVID-19>) guidelines.
- Require all dining facility staff to wear face masks and gloves while working and interacting with the public.
- Plan to limit the number of individuals dining in a single facility at one time. Dining hall capacity should achieve appropriate social distancing of diners, and, once the target capacity is reached, an additional individual should only be allowed entry when another leaves.
- Eliminate buffet-style, self-serve food and beverage stations and replace with staff-served meal stations.
- Develop traffic flow patterns and seating arrangements for each venue that allow for social distancing and discourage unnecessary congregating. Physically spaced (6-foot) floor markers should be used for waiting lines outside and inside the facility. Inside the facility there should be an appropriately limited number of tables and chairs per table.
- Promote more pre-order, curbside pick-up, delivery, and “grab-and-go” food service options.
- Arrange for food delivery to students in isolation or quarantine.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider establishing staggered mealtimes for sit-down venues, with specified times for different groups of students (residential and non-residential), employees, and visitors.
- Consider establishing additional food service facilities (including food trucks) on campus to allow for greater social distancing and less congregation.

Events and Welcoming Students/Visitors to Campus

Essential Items:

- For all event venues, develop occupancy limits and seating charts that follow local and state guidelines on event size and allow for social distancing at all events.
- For all event venues, establish rules for traffic flow and congregational spaces (e.g. bathrooms, concession areas) that minimize risk of disease transmission while still meeting accessibility requirements.
- For all venues, and for each event, establish a pre-event, intra-event, and post-event cleaning plan based on public health and CDC guidelines. Ensure that event scheduling allows for appropriate cleaning to take place between the conclusion of one event and the beginning of another.
- For all major, high-occupancy events (e.g. Commencement, Homecoming) develop a plan that considers:
 - Moving events to Spring 2021 or Academic Year 2021-2022 when possible.
 - Breaking up singular event instances into multiple, smaller instances of that event.
 - Avoiding overlapping events that place stress on campus staffing, cleaning resources, and ability to maintain social distancing.
- For “welcome to campus” events (e.g. orientation, move-in day), develop a plan that considers:
 - Staggering arrival/move-in days and times to allow for smaller groups and lighter traffic flow.
 - A strategy coordinated with state and local public health authorities for testing students who are returning to campus from time recently spent out-of-state due to travel or residency.
 - Breaking up larger orientation events into multiple smaller events.
 - Allowing students to complete some items on their “welcome to campus” checklist virtually in order to reduce crowding on campus.
 - Accounting for any relevant quarantine and health check requirements when welcoming students and/or visitors to campus from outside Montana.
- Establish decision criteria for hosting (or not hosting) non-college/university events.
- Require all off-campus organizations scheduling non-college/university events on campus to agree to updated terms and conditions requiring campus sanitation protocols.
- Design in-person campus tours to include smaller groups that meet social distancing guidelines and restrictions on gathering size.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider greater use of online/virtual events, including instances when events are livestreamed to off-site audiences rather than hosted in front of on-site audiences.
- Consider limiting the number of non-college/university events hosted on campus.
- Consider contractual restrictions when planning for live streaming and/or online delivery of events.
- Consider ticketing policies that require advance purchase and registration to better adhere to event capacity limits and to support public health efforts at contact tracing in event of exposure.
- Consider - in conjunction with campus health, campus risk management, and local health officials - the risk-reward balance in hosting events that will bring high numbers of attendees from out of state, or from known high-risk areas.
- Consider using outdoor venues if they allow for better spacing and air flow.
- Consider additional training and support for event staff to prepare them for health, safety, and audience management strategies.
- Consider additional costs associated with sanitation requirements when contracting events for non-college/university entities.
- Consider on-site messaging about health and safety at all events.
- For events hosted by student organizations, consider a greater advisory and monitoring role for faculty/staff advisors.

Athletics

Note: While we have provided general planning guidelines here, this planning area will be strongly influenced by upcoming guidance established by the MUS Athletics 2020 Advisory Group and by future decisions from relevant athletics conferences (e.g. Big Sky Conference, Frontier Conference) and national organizing bodies (e.g. NCAA, NAIA).

Essential Items:

- Conduct an assessment of the potential for COVID-19 transmission in each sport (e.g. individual vs. team sports, contact vs. non-contact sports, major spectator vs. limited spectator sports, etc.). Risk factors should be established and return to practice and competition should be based on factors including, but not necessarily limited to, any impediments to social distancing (e.g. contact between players), ball transfer, cleaning of shared equipment, and feasibility of social distancing among any spectators.
- Develop a health assessment survey for student athletes at onset of the practice and competitive seasons; and develop an ongoing health screening process to monitor health of student athletes at regular intervals throughout the practice and competitive seasons.
- Promote social distancing and enhanced cleaning in areas of congregation, including: training rooms, locker rooms, strength and conditioning facilities, and other team meeting areas.
- Athletics administration and sports medicine staff should follow federal, state, local, and institutional public health recommendations related to screening and testing of student-athletes and staff following team, work-related, and personal travel.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider, with guidance from state and local public health authorities, the challenges and opportunities associated with a consistent COVID-19 testing and monitoring plan for student-athletes competing in inter-collegiate sports.
- Consider creation of a COVID-19 Athletics Coordination Team, which could include the athletic director or designee, head athletic trainer or designee, head team physician or designee, coaching representative, strength and conditioning representative, student health services representative, counseling services representative, a student-athlete, and a representative from the local health care system (campus medical center or local health care system).
- Consider whether travel for competition is appropriate given the current stage of the pandemic (especially at the competition location), potential isolation and quarantine measures that could arise as a result of the travel, and additional screening that may be required as a result of the travel.

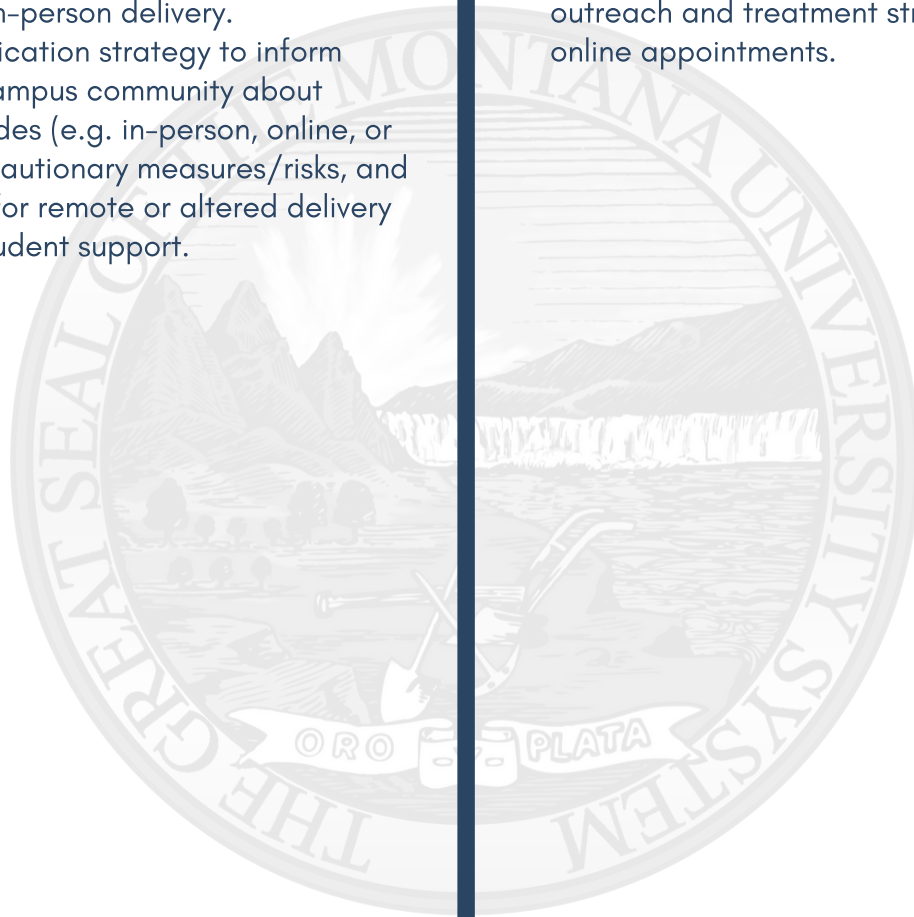
Provide Student Support Services

Essential Items:

- Where possible, plan to supplement delivery of in-person support services and student conduct management with alternate delivery strategies.
- Train student support staff to effectively use alternate delivery methods.
- Design staffing, facilities, scheduling, and traffic flow to mitigate health risks for students and employees during in-person delivery.
- Develop a communication strategy to inform students and the campus community about various delivery modes (e.g. in-person, online, or both), specific precautionary measures/risks, and contingency plans for remote or altered delivery for each area of student support.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider education and support for students that helps them easily access and effectively use online student support services.
- Consider developing tools to assess the effectiveness of student support services being offered through different delivery methods.
- Consider revamped and expanded mental health outreach and treatment strategies, including online appointments.



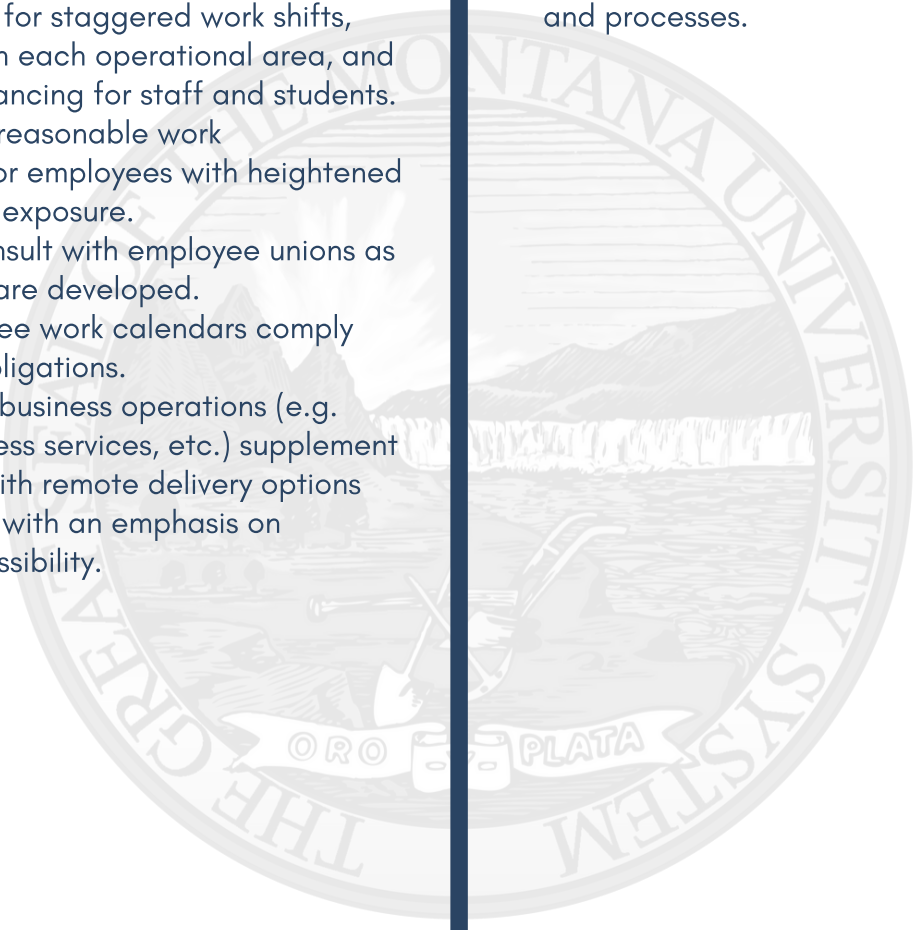
Staff Campus Operations

Essential Items:

- Design staffing and facility use plans to mitigate health risks for employees and students. These plans may include:
 - Redesigned physical spaces, designated traffic flow patterns, and use of physical barriers such as plexi-glass where feasible.
 - Adjusted staffing schedules and operational hours that allow for staggered work shifts, rotating teams in each operational area, and more social distancing for staff and students.
- Plan a strategy for reasonable work accommodations for employees with heightened risk from COVID-19 exposure.
- Where relevant, consult with employee unions as staffing strategies are developed.
- Ensure that employee work calendars comply with contractual obligations.
- For student-facing business operations (e.g. financial aid, business services, etc.) supplement in-person service with remote delivery options whenever possible, with an emphasis on phone/tablet accessibility.

Planning Considerations:

- In consultation with OCHE, consider using shared services procurement with other MUS campuses when the need for new business operations technologies and services arises.
- Consider updating office/department websites to make it easier for current and prospective students to understand necessary documentation and processes.



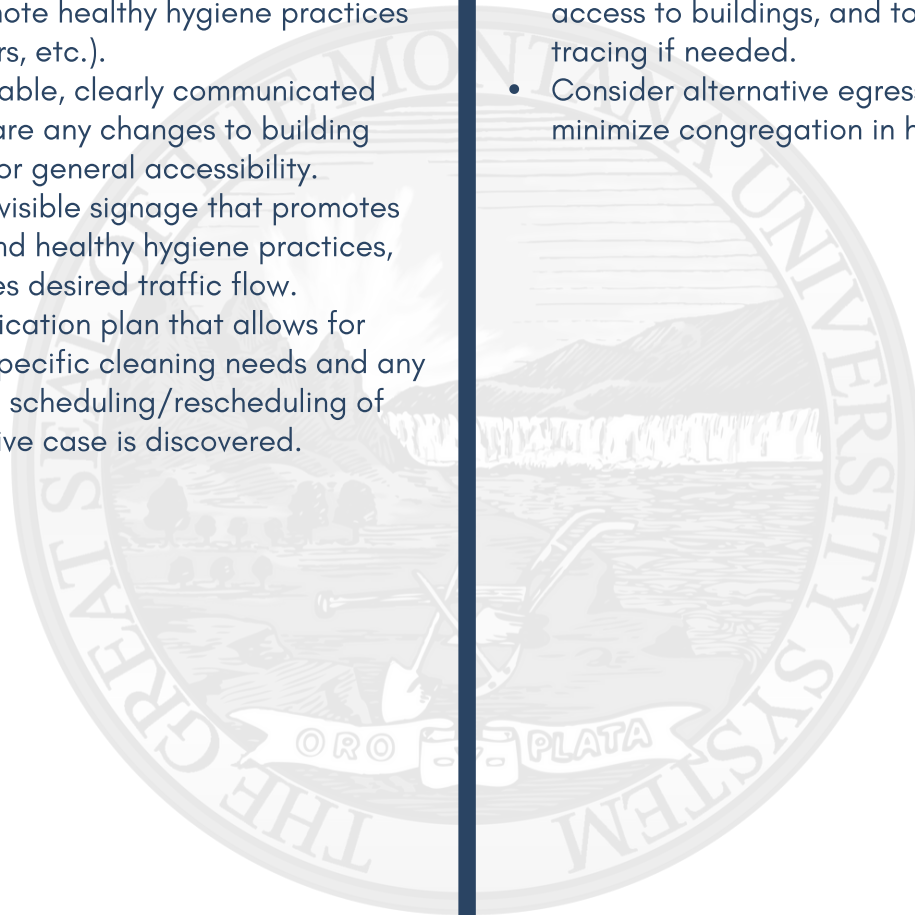
Maintain Buildings and Facilities

Essential Items:

- Develop a building/facilities usage and staffing plan that ensures adequate cleaning and sanitation, with particular attention to all high traffic areas, common areas, and restroom facilities and develop tracking process for cleanings.
- Develop a plan for placement and monitoring of materials that promote healthy hygiene practices (refilling of sanitizers, etc.).
- Establish, as applicable, clearly communicated guidelines if there are any changes to building hours of operation or general accessibility.
- Develop a plan for visible signage that promotes social distancing and healthy hygiene practices, and clearly indicates desired traffic flow.
- Develop a communication plan that allows for timely reaction to specific cleaning needs and any needed changes to scheduling/rescheduling of space after a positive case is discovered.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider developing guidance for classroom instructors and students to promote best practices for sanitizing classroom spaces in between classes (e.g. wiping down desks/workspaces with available wipes).
- Consider enhanced swipe/access technology to improve control over building traffic, to monitor access to buildings, and to assist with contact tracing if needed.
- Consider alternative egress/ingress patterns to minimize congregation in high traffic areas.



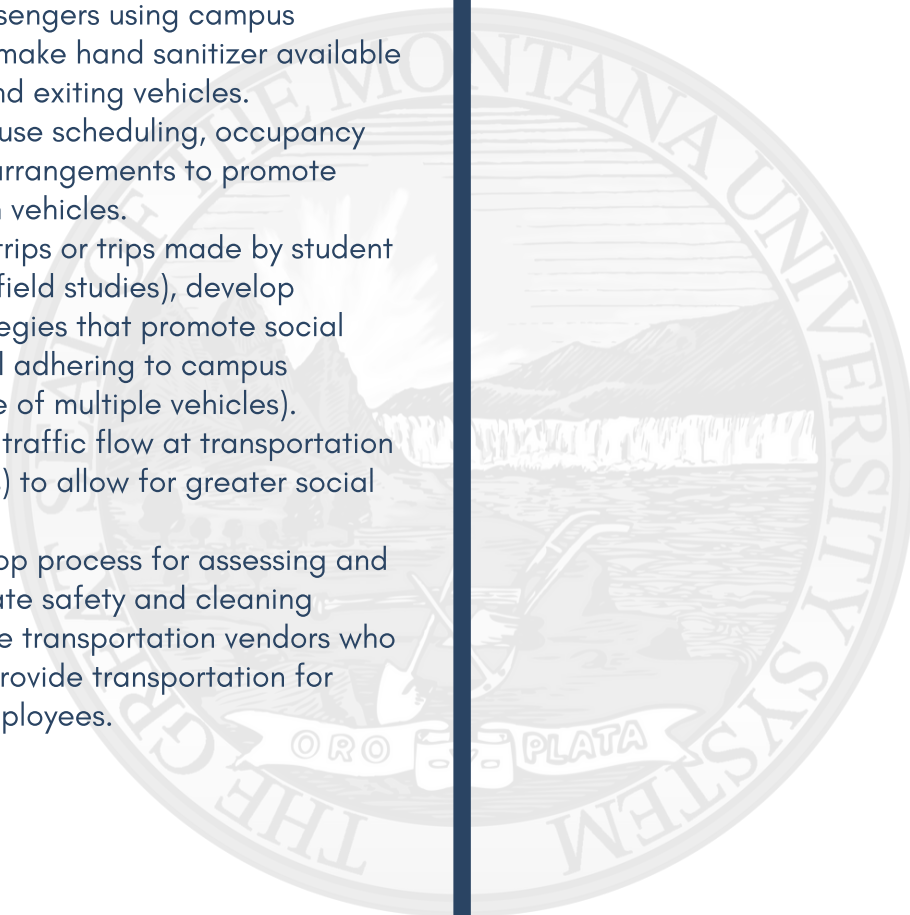
Provide Campus Transportation

Essential Items:

- In accordance with CDC and applicable local and state public health guidelines, develop and execute adequate cleaning protocols for campus vehicles and transportation hubs (e.g. campus bus stops) during prime usage hours and in between prime usage hours.
- Strongly encourage use of face coverings for employees and passengers using campus transportation and make hand sanitizer available to those entering and exiting vehicles.
- Whenever feasible, use scheduling, occupancy limits, and seating arrangements to promote social distancing on vehicles.
- For course-related trips or trips made by student organizations (e.g. field studies), develop transportation strategies that promote social distancing while still adhering to campus regulations (e.g. use of multiple vehicles).
- Design seating and traffic flow at transportation hubs (e.g. bus stops) to allow for greater social distancing.
- If applicable, develop process for assessing and maintaining adequate safety and cleaning protocols for outside transportation vendors who are contracted to provide transportation for students and/or employees.

Planning Considerations:

- Consider promoting, as practical for students and employees, transportation modes that allow for greater social distancing (e.g. bike-to-campus incentives).



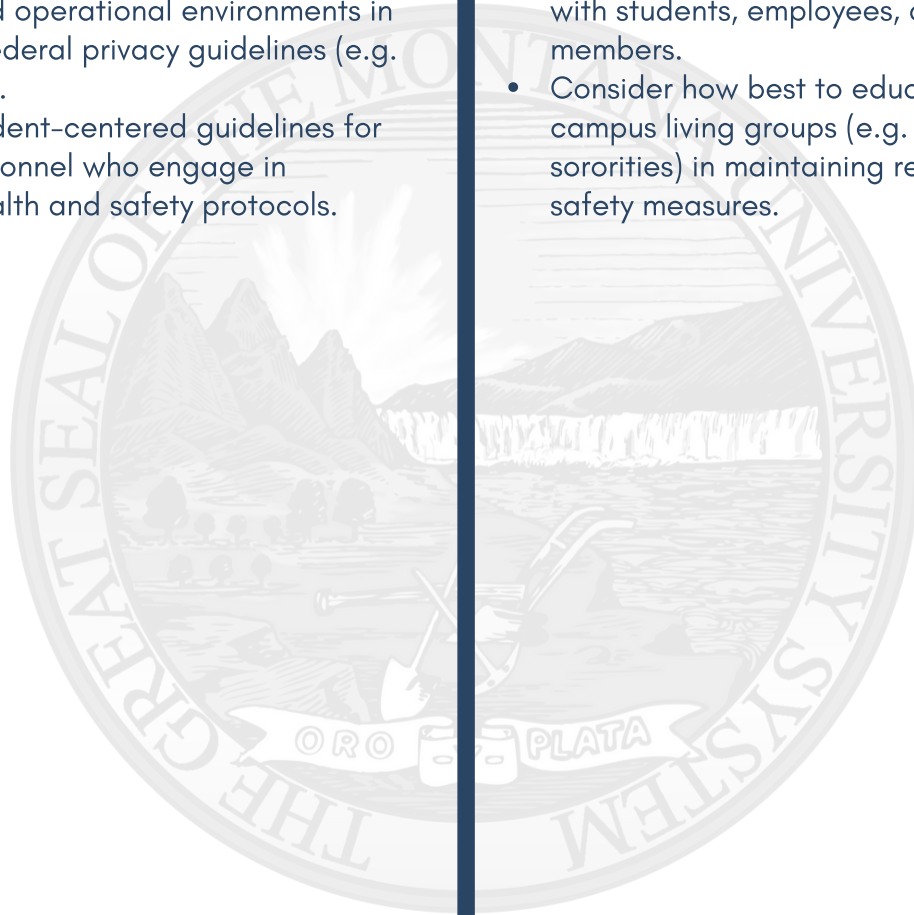
Campus Safety and Security

Essential Items:

- Develop campus safety and security plan that balances public health concerns and precautions with protecting student and campus community safety in accordance with federal guidelines (e.g. Clery, Title IX guidelines, etc.).
- Develop plans and protocols to maintain and protect student and employee privacy in remote, online, and blended operational environments in accordance with federal privacy guidelines (e.g. FERPA, HIPAA, etc.).
- Establish clear, student-centered guidelines for campus safety personnel who engage in enforcement of health and safety protocols.

Planning Considerations:

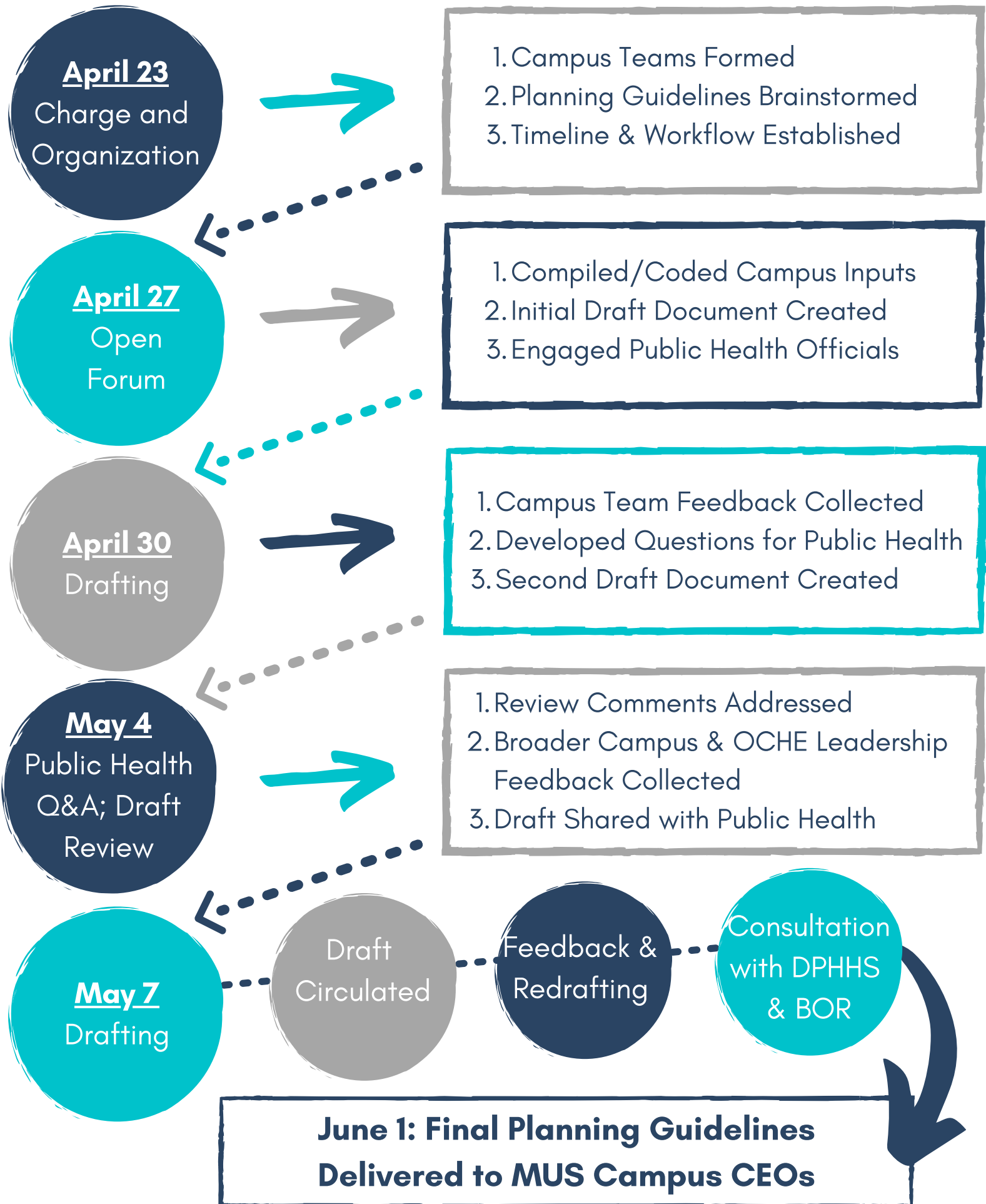
- Consider a plan and provide training for Behavioral Intervention Teams to respond to potential increases in campus student and employee concerns via in-person, hybrid, and remote environments.
- Consider developing a specific communications plan to share all policy and procedure changes with students, employees, and community members.
- Consider how best to educate and support off-campus living groups (e.g. fraternities and sororities) in maintaining relevant health and safety measures.



MUS Healthy Fall Task Force Members and Staff

- **Melinda Arnold**, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, MSU Billings
- **Sandy Bauman**, Acting Dean/CEO, Helena College UM
- **Carina Beck**, Director, Allen Yarnell Center for Student Success, Montana State University
- **Les Cook**, Chancellor, Montana Technological University
- **Leanne Frost**, Director, General Studies Division, Great Falls College MSU
- **Stephanie Gray**, Dean, Gallatin College MSU
- **Jon Harbor**, Executive Vice President and Provost, University of Montana
- **Nicole Hazelbaker**, Dean of Students, The University of Montana Western
- **Dave Krueger**, Dean, College of Technical Sciences, MSU Northern
- **Bob Mokwa**, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Montana State University
- **Brock Tessman** (chair), ARSA Deputy Commissioner, Montana University System
- **Steve Thompson**, Director of Campus Recreation, University of Montana
- **Crystine Miller** (staff), Director of Student Affairs and Student Engagement, Montana University System
- **Rebecca Power** (staff), Academic Initiatives Analyst, Montana University System

Task Force Process



Appendix A: State & National Resources

Note: In the dynamic and evolving public health situation, resources and guidelines are frequently updated. Please check resources to ensure that you are referencing the most up-to-date version. Links last updated May 29, 2020.

Public Health Guidelines & Information

“Communication Resources” (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

“COVID-19 Information & Updates” (Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services)

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>

“COVID-19 Public Advice” (World Health Organization)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

“Prevention Guidance” (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>

“Workplaces During the COVID-19 Pandemic” (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/workplace-decision-tree.pdf>

Higher Education Guidance

“Colleges' Plans for Reopening in Fall” (The Chronicle of Higher Education)

https://www.chronicle.com/article/Here-s-a-List-of-Colleges-/248626?cid=wcontentgrid_hp_1b

“Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education” (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

“Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era” (American College Health Association)

https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf

“Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Sport” (NCAA)

<https://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport>

“Coronavirus COVID-19 Resources” (CUPAHR)

<https://www.cupahr.org/knowledge-center/covid-19-resources/>

“COVID-19 Information” (National Science Foundation)

https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/

“COVID-19 Resources” (Association on Higher Education & Disability)

<https://www.ahead.org/professional-resources/coronavirus-resources>

Higher Education Guidance (continued)

"COVID-19 Resources" (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources)

<https://www.cupahr.org/knowledge-center/covid-19-resources/>

"COVID-19 Web Center" (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators)

<https://www.nasfaa.org/covid19>

"Recovery 2020: Key Questions & Principles for Campus Leaders" (American Council on Education)

<https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Higher-Ed-Questions-to-Ask-about-the-Fall.pdf>

"Resources for Colleges, Universities, and Higher Learning" (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>

"Returning To Campus Checklist" (National Association of College & University Business Offices and University Risk Management & Insurance Association)

<https://www.nacubo.org/Topics/COVID-19/COVID-19-Checklists/Return-to-Work>

"State Policy Responses and Other Executive Actions" (Education Commission of the States)

<https://www.ecs.org/covid-19-update/>

Cleaning

"Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-Emergency Transport Vehicles" (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html>

"Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes" (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

Travel

"COVID-19 Travel Guidance" (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

"COVID-19 Traveler Information" (U.S. Department of State)

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

Housing

"Future of Housing Work Group" (Association of College and University Housing Officers)

<https://www.acuho-i.org/resources/cid/7357>

"Guidance on Shared or Congregate Housing" (Center for Disease Control)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>

Appendix B: Face Covering Requirement

July 18, 2020

Updated MUS Healthy Fall 2020 Planning Guidelines: Face Covering Requirement

The following update is pursuant to the July 8, 2020 recommendation of the MUS Healthy Fall 2020 Task Force. As soon as possible, but no later than August 1, 2020 – in accordance with the guidelines, exceptions, and accommodations outlined below – all campuses of the Montana University System (MUS) will articulate and implement practices and protocols requiring students, employees, and visitors to wear a face covering while on MUS campus properties and leased facilities.

Campuses will articulate practices and protocols that require face coverings in all indoor spaces (with some notable exceptions listed below), and all enclosed or partially enclosed outdoor spaces. Face coverings will be required in all outdoor spaces where social distancing is not possible or difficult to reliably maintain. In outdoor settings where social distancing is possible, face coverings continue to be strongly recommended. Campus requirements will apply to all MUS students and employees, and all visitors including service providers, contractors, vendors, suppliers, families, and community members.

Campus face covering requirements will supplement measures such as social distancing, frequent handwashing, and frequent cleaning of office, work, and living spaces, already outlined in the June 1, 2020 release of the MUS Healthy Fall 2020 Planning Guidelines that were provided to campuses to follow as they developed their individual campus plans (<https://mus.edu/coronavirus/MUS-Healthy-Fall-2020-Planning-Guidelines.pdf>).

CDC guidance suggests that face coverings may help reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used in public settings (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>). Face coverings help prevent people who are unaware they have the virus and are either asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic from unknowingly spreading it to others.

What Counts as a Face Covering?

Appropriate face coverings are those that cover the mouth and nose of the wearer. Following CDC guidance, effective face coverings include simple cloth masks, scarves, buffs, or bandanas.

Based on CDC guidance, the most effective face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- securely stay in place, covering the nose and mouth;
- include multiple layers of fabric;
- allow for breathing without restriction; and
- be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damaging them or changing their shape.

While not ideal, disposable, single use paper masks are also acceptable when another face covering option is not available. Unless in healthcare or other specialized settings, N95 or surgical masks should not be used as they are critical supplies and should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

While plastic face shields are not considered a face covering under the guidelines outlined above, face shields may be used in instances where an individual can consistently and reliably maintain appropriate social distancing and where the University has expressly approved the use of the face shield instead of a cloth mask. Such instances may include, but not be limited to, ADA and other medical accommodations. If an individual is approved to use a plastic face shield, the shield should cover from above the eyes to below the chin to reduce the risk of the spread of respiratory particles.

Exceptions

Campuses will articulate practices and protocols that allow students, employees, and visitors to be exempt from face covering requirements in the following circumstances:

- when alone in an office, enclosed study area, or other space where permitted by official notice;
- when in campus residence hall rooms or apartments; however, face coverings are still required in common areas such as hallways and when visiting other rooms;
- when eating or drinking in a situation where social distancing is practiced;
- when working or spending time outdoors (e.g. walking, exercising) and at least a six-foot distance can be consistently and reliably maintained;
- in instances or spaces (such as welding labs, nursing labs, etc.) in which other requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE) make it either impractical or unsafe to wear an additional face covering;
- when alone in a vehicle or utility vehicle used for MUS business; however, face coverings are required in vehicles used for MUS business when there is more than one person inside the vehicle; and
- when an accommodation is necessary as indicated by a medical or similar subject matter expert and granted by express written permission of the University.

In accordance with CDC guidelines, children under the age of two, those who cannot physically remove a face covering without assistance, or those who have requested and received a necessary accommodation are not required to wear face coverings.

Accommodations

Furthermore, campuses will articulate practices and protocols that allow for individuals with circumstances that require an exception to the face covering requirement – as indicated by a medical or similar subject matter professional – to request one from the University. To request an exception, employees should contact their campus human resources department. Campuses should direct students seeking an accommodation to contact the campus student affairs office and/or the campus disability resource center.

Accountability

Each campus will articulate accountability practices and protocols for students and employees to follow in reporting and responding to non-compliance in classrooms and other learning, work, and campus spaces. Campus accountability practices and protocols should emphasize the importance of communication and promote ample opportunities for compliance. In the event of willful non-compliance, campuses should articulate practices and protocols that are aligned with existing student conduct and classroom management policies and guidelines. Students, employees, and visitors engaging in sustained, willful non-compliance may be directed to leave campus spaces, taken off duty, and in certain cases subject to disciplinary action.

Campus practices and protocols should articulate for employees how to report and respond to non-compliance in classroom settings and other learning, work, and campus environments. Specific practices and protocols can be tailored to each campus but must meet the following objectives:

- Clearly communicate the face covering requirement and accountability practices and protocols to students and employees so they are applied consistently to all classroom, learning, work, and other environments across campus. (e.g. consistent language addressing the face covering requirement should appear on all course syllabi).
- Clarify existing, relevant campus policies and the extent to which they allow classroom instructors to manage their classroom learning environment by directing non-compliant students to leave the classroom and, if necessary, to end a particular class meeting in response to a disruptive or aggressive student.
- Outline graduated accountability measures that match the intensity of non-compliance. For example, isolated, unintentional instances of non-compliance (e.g. a student forgetting to bring a face covering to class) should be met with an opportunity to comply (e.g. reminding the student of the requirement and providing a single use face covering). On the other hand, repeated, willful non-compliance (e.g. a student who refuses to wear a face covering in a classroom setting, even after multiple requests and being offered a free face covering) can be addressed more directly (e.g. directing the student to leave the classroom space or ending the class meeting if the student refuses to leave). Repeated, willful non-compliance should be reported to the appropriate department/division head and may lead to disciplinary action.

Accountability (continued)

For instances of non-compliance that are not covered by existing or new policies, practices, and protocols on accountability in the classroom and other learning settings, employees should share any concerns about non-compliance with their immediate supervisor or department/division head and students should share any concerns about non-compliance with a campus student affairs officer.

Employee and Student Awareness

Prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester, each institution must develop and implement a training strategy for all employees that ensures they have a clear understanding of their campus' face covering requirement and accountability practices and protocols. In addition, students should be made aware of the ways in which the face covering requirement will be enforced by employees prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester.