



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Aug. 4, 2020

What Wichita State employees can expect this fall

Dear colleagues.

“This year will be different.” “It won’t be the same.” “Everything has changed.” “It will be interesting, for sure.”

We have heard these sentiments countless times over the past few weeks from many of you – even said them ourselves. The truth is, you’re right. Everything *is* different. It seems almost unfathomable that, only five months ago, things were “normal.” We were planning for graduations, summer vacations, new jobs. We took for granted the ordinary – getting together with friends on a moment’s notice, hugging our loved ones. And we never even considered the mundane – swinging by the grocery store on the way home and picking up everything we need.

The same is true here at Wichita State. Our campus *looks* different: There are signs everywhere reminding us all to wear masks and stay at least 6 feet apart. Our campus *sounds* different: It’s a bit quieter, more thoughtful and reflective. Our campus *feels* different: There are more virtual connections and fewer in-person activities.

So, this year *will* be different. COVID-19 has seen to that. But, regardless of this pandemic, this year was always *meant* to be different for Wichita State, and for each of you, to be *special*. This year, Wichita State will celebrate 125 years of innovation in education. In September 1895, Fairmount College, the forerunner of the Wichita State University that we know today, held its first classes just northeast of 17th and Hillside. Since that time, the university has experienced a remarkable evolution, transforming into an innovation catalyst and creating a unique and ideal environment for students, industry and community to work together and build a brighter future for our city, region and world. The university even survived the last major pandemic in 1918.

This celebration of our history reminds us that here at Wichita State, we not only survive on being different, we *thrive*. And each of you is part of the difference that Wichita State makes, both today and for the generations to come.

As we face COVID-19 and the challenges of tomorrow, our top priority remains the health, safety and well-being of our entire campus community as we strive to maintain goals of educational excellence, research and innovation. To that end, we have put in place a number of protocols and procedures for the fall, in accordance with federal, state and local public health and governmental guidance. [Read a web version of this message or continue reading below.](#)

Health and safety

- **Self-Checks Before Coming to Campus.** All members of the campus community should monitor their health, check their temperature each day and use the COVID-19 Self-Observation [Questionnaire](#) before coming to campus. For more information on what to do if you have symptoms or think you have been exposed, please visit [Student Health's website](#) or contact your health care provider.
- **Responsibilities While on Campus.** Each of us has personal responsibilities to help mitigate the spread of this virus. While on campus, remember to: (1) practice social distancing; (2) wear a face mask; (3) wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer); (4) avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; (5) avoid close contact with people who are sick and put distance between yourself and others; (6) cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and then throw the tissue in the trash; and (7) clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your personal space.
- **Social Distancing:** Students, faculty, staff and visitors are required to maintain a distance of 6 feet between individuals to the greatest extent possible. Classrooms and common spaces such as the Rhatigan Student Center and Shocker Hall Dining have already been reconfigured to support social distancing. Building and classroom entrances and exits may be designated in/out to promote social distancing and coordinate traffic flow. Stairwells may also be designated as one-way up or down traffic to reduce close contact. Elevators have been designated as a place of potential close contact and occupancy may be limited. Individuals should use the stairs whenever possible. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer upon departing an elevator.
- **Face coverings:** [Students, faculty, staff and visitors](#) must wear face masks or face coverings over their mouths and noses while on Wichita State University campuses in all hallways, public spaces, classrooms and other common areas of campus buildings when 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained or unless walking alone outdoors or working alone in a personal office space; are in their individual room, suite, or apartment in campus housing; or are eating/drinking in a designated area (i.e., RSC, Shocker Dining, etc.). There are certain exceptions to this policy including, but not limited to children 5 years or younger, or those individuals who have documented disabilities (including mental health) that would prohibit the use of a face mask or face covering. If you need a mask, you can purchase reusable masks from the Shocker Store in Braeburn Square or Central Services (010 Morrison Hall). There are also a limited number of free masks available (while supplies last). [Get all the details here.](#)

- **Public Gathering Capacities.** [Gathering size limits](#) may be limited based on federal, state, or local public health and governmental guidance. Gatherings are currently limited to groups of up to 15 “commonly known” individuals. Groups of commonly known individuals must be located at least 6 feet away from other groups at all times. If individuals are not commonly known to one another, they must maintain 6 feet of distance with only infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity. Local public health and government guidance currently caps maximum attendance at 2,000 attendees. However, at all times, the University reserves the right to determine the maximum number of attendees that may be present at any on-campus gathering, which number may be less than the number allowed by public health and government guidance. Please see [Sedgwick County Emergency Public Health Order](#). *Note: these limitations do not apply to classrooms.*
- **Enhanced Cleaning Protocols.** Facilities Services is providing daily cleaning and disinfecting for all classroom spaces, common areas and public spaces. Offices and individual staff are responsible for daily cleaning of office desks, tables, shared equipment, personal items and space within the office environment. Disposable masks, hand sanitizer (in 24/32-ounce spray bottles), surface disinfectant (in 24/32-ounce spray bottles), non-latex gloves, paper towels, blue painters’ tape and safety glasses are available through Facilities Services. Please submit a work order. These items can be picked up at the Gaddis Physical Plant 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Facilities Services will maintain an inventory of these supplies sufficient to ensure a regular cleaning and disinfecting program in accordance with accepted health and safety practices, such as CDC guidance for schools and workplaces. Hand sanitizer will be available in each building for use by anyone.
- **Emotional Wellness:** The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a special service provided for State of Kansas benefits eligible employees and their dependents at no charge. The EAP provides information, short-term counseling, advice and referrals from licensed professionals who understand the typical stresses we all face. You may reach out to these professionals directly for confidential discussion www.guidanceresources.com or 888-275-1205 (option 1), TDD 800-697-0353 (Company ID SOKEAP). For emergencies, please dial 9-1-1.

Covid-19 Testing and Tracking

- **COVID-19 Testing:** Wichita State is offering testing to students with a known exposure or presentation of COVID-19 symptoms AND also mandating testing of all students living in and employees working in Housing and Residence Life, student athletes and certain students and employees, including but not limited to those associated with clinical programs. Those individuals required to undergo mandatory testing will receive additional information via email. If you feel you need to be tested for COVID-19, please visit [Student Health](#) or contact your health care provider.

- **Contact Tracing.** Contact tracing is conducted through the [Sedgwick County Health Department](#). The university only conducts contact investigations as coordinated through Student Health Services and in support of the Health Department. We have adopted procedures and protocols to alert members of our community, including our students, employees and campus partners, if the university has knowledge of potential COVID-19 exposure. The university relies heavily on students and employees to let us know if they believe they may have COVID-19.

Staffing and Employee/Supervisor Information

- **Academic Calendar/Classes:** The semester begins on Aug. 17 and ends Dec. 10. We have modified Fall and Thanksgiving Breaks to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 after travel. All courses for the fall will be held either online or hybrid (partially online, partially in-person). All in-person activity will end on Nov. 20, and the last four days of classes and finals will be offered remotely. Before the first day of class, students should be instructed to go [here](#) to learn more about what to expect for each of their courses. They should also log on to [Blackboard](#) to view other information about their courses. Additionally, we have a request of faculty: Please reach out to students ahead of Aug. 17. At this point there are a lot of uncertainties about coming back to school and this will help put them at ease.
- **Office hours:** While students will be able to access all services during normal business hours, many campus offices will be operating with modified in-person [office hours](#). All supervisors should have submitted schedules to their supervisor and begun implementing their staffing plans. Please keep in mind that not all office and individual schedules will be the same. Your office hours may look different from another colleague's – and that's okay. Increased flexibility will result in increased safety.
- **Employee/Supervisor Training:** All [supervisors](#) and [employees](#) are encouraged to complete COVID-19 training. Additional information for employees and supervisors can be found on the Human Resources [website](#).
- **Time Off Policies and Guidance.** Wichita State is committed to supporting our employees during this time. For more information on available leave, please visit the [Human Resources website](#) or email totalrewards@wichita.edu.

Travel

- **Domestic Travel:** Employees may participate in limited essential university-sponsored travel, provided they follow certain guidelines. Essential travel includes travel that is absolutely necessary to fulfill one's core or primary job function and/or to provide crucial support to the university. Travel for activities such as conferences, professional development, or speaking engagements is considered non-essential. All essential travel must be approved in advance by your supervisor and divisional VP. Employees are required to follow all request for [travel procedures](#).

- **International Travel:** All university-sponsored international travel is suspended until further notice.
- **Personal Travel:** There are no current restrictions for personal domestic or international travel by university employees; however, all travel is discouraged. Individuals who do travel should follow all [CDC](#) and [KDHE](#) guidelines regarding quarantine and isolation upon their return. Because employees may be required to quarantine upon returning to Kansas, employees should work with their supervisor to predetermine if they can work from home during any period of required quarantine. Employees who travel internationally are encouraged to complete the [International Travel Form](#) prior to departure.

University Dining and Events

- **Dining and Rhatigan Student Center hours:** WSU Dining will have modified hours, layouts and cleaning schedules. Please click [here](#) for more details about dining options, including dining options at Braeburn Square.
- **Athletics:** The American Athletic Conference has delayed the start of 2020 fall Olympic sports competition until at least Sept. 1. The delay in competition includes exhibition and non-conference competition in the sports of men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer and volleyball. Please check www.goshockers.com for additional details and attendance modifications.

This integration back to campus will require all of us to be active participants in protecting our health, as well as the health of our family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. While the university continues to plan for your safety, we ask that each of you cooperate with these updated measures and remember that we *all* share the responsibility for protecting the health and safety of our community.

We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and have open conversation with you about any necessary changes or modifications as the fall semester progresses.

In the meantime, our deepest appreciation for all you do and for your unwavering commitment to the health, safety and future of Shocker Nation. Welcome back!

Dr. Jay Golden, President

Dr. Rick Muma, Executive Vice President and Provost