

## What Students Should Know: COVID-19 and Returning to Campus

As we return to campus in spring 2021, SUNY Cortland's first priority is the health and safety of our campus community, including its students, faculty, and staff. The best way to maintain the safest environment possible throughout 2021 and beyond is for each of us to take steps to minimize the risks and avoid behavior that could lead to another study-in-place period. This vigilance not only protects our own health, but that of for all members of the university and Cortland community. This includes:

- wearing face coverings (masks)
- hand washing
- social distancing
- participating in testing and tracing
- completing daily screenings
- being mindful of our surroundings and the impact we have

Any of us alone can spread this disease and cause harm to others. But **all of us together can build a community that is safe and healthy**, where educational success is possible.

Here's what you need to know and do as SUNY and SUNY Cortland welcome students back to campus in 2021:

### Stay Informed

Because students are returning to campus during a pandemic, it is critical that all students be aware of all policies, expectations, safeguards and the inevitable changes that will be made during the semester.

- The primary source of factual, updated information on campus operations and student expectations for the spring 2021 semester will be SUNY Cortland's [Spring 2021 Campus Guide](#). Updated information in this document as well as additional topics will be found here.
- Students must read their email, as this is the primary means of communication through which updates, changes, expectations and rules will be provided to students.
  - President Erik J. Bitterbaum will communicate directly with students through email every Tuesday and Thursday. These emails will also be sent to parents whose email address is on file with SUNY Cortland.
  - Additional emails will be sent to students from a variety of campus departments and offices detailing additional elements, modifications and expectation of student action and behavior.
- Critical messages will additionally be shared through social media, specifically the university's Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- Important information will be presented on the campus visual messaging system.
- Health information related to the pandemic will be presented through the university's health podcast, "[Take 10 For You.](#)"
- For the spring semester, SUNY Cortland is exploring additional methods of communicating COVID-related material to students. These could include peer-to-peer outreach, video communications and a variety of other outreach initiatives.

### Return to Campus Safely – Testing and Isolation Requirements

Before coming to campus

- All students must be pre-screened daily for travel history, COVID-19 history and COVID-19 symptoms for two (2) weeks prior to return. Students must follow all recommendations resulting from a positive screen result.
- Students who have traveled to/from restricted states/regions or to/from international locations as defined by New York State must follow the New York State Travel Advisory - whether living on- or off-campus — and attest that they have submitted the New York Traveler Health form and will follow the guidance related to mandatory testing, quarantine/isolation and the timing of their return to campus. SUNY Cortland will use its West Campus Apartments for self-quarantine and/or isolation housing for students arriving from non-contiguous states or countries on the CDC Advisory list.
- All students must complete a seven (7)-day precautionary quarantine prior to coming to campus. During this period, it is expected that students will not leave their home or apartment and will strictly adhere to guidelines for social distancing, face covering and hygiene and will limit exposure of family and housemates as much as possible.
- Present evidence to Student Health Services of a negative COVID-19 test taken within seven (7) days BEFORE returning.
  - Students are expected to arrange for their pre-arrival testing. It is covered by most health insurance and is offered free at state and county [testing sites throughout the state](#).
  - A portal for submitting test results will be made available to students.
  - In rare situations where a student cannot access testing, students will be able to work directly with a representative from the College regarding an alternative testing plan. Students who may be in this situation should reach out to [covidscreening@cortland.edu](mailto:covidscreening@cortland.edu).

#### After coming to campus

- Upon returning for spring 2021 on-campus activities, any student who will live on campus, take at least one class on campus, use services on campus or work on campus must participate in on-campus COVID-19 testing.
  - ✓ Students living in university-operated residence halls will participate in pooled testing on the day they move in.
  - ✓ Off-campus and commuter students who intend to go to any campus facility during the spring semester should participate in pooled testing between Jan. 25 and Jan. 31. An online sign-up process will be made available through MyRedDragon.
- Submit an attestation that they have completed a seven (7) day precautionary quarantine prior to returning to campus.

#### Get Screened Daily

Everyone coming to campus, including students, must complete a daily health screening consisting of a series of simple questions and electronically sign an agreement to follow all policies and procedures put in place by SUNY Cortland in response to the pandemic.

- Online screening will be done through the same app that was used during the fall 2020 semester. Students new to SUNY Cortland for spring 2021 can find the app on myRedDragon, under the Red Dragon Safe tab.
- Students are expected to begin screening themselves for COVID-19 risk factors, and following all resulting guidance, 14 days before arriving on campus.
- Once on campus, all students will be required to do a daily screening every morning, even on days they do not plan to come to campus.

### **Get Tested Regularly**

- SUNY Cortland will continue to conduct surveillance testing of the student population and employees as soon as students return to campus as per SUNY's Mandatory COVID-19 Testing Program as announced on Sept. 4, 2020. All students who live on campus and all off-campus students who plan to be on campus for any reason shall be tested once every week.

### **Check the COVID-19 Dashboard**

SUNY maintains a comprehensive dashboard of COVID-19 testing and infection rate status across the system and at each campus. <https://www.suny.edu/covid19-tracker/>.

### **Be Responsible – It's Easy to Do Your Part**

Each of us can take small steps to protect ourselves and the campus community. Because COVID-19 is highly contagious, these simple measures apply **both on and off-campus**:

- **Wear face coverings** (masks) at all times on campus, including in classrooms, conference rooms and other public spaces, even when you are able to maintain six feet of social distancing.
  - Exceptions to this requirement include when students are (1) in their private residential or personal space with no guests, or (2) eating meals on-campus while seated and socially distanced.
  - Faculty and staff are likewise exempt when alone in their office or other private spaces.
- **Regularly wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer where soap and water are not available.
- **Stay home when you are sick** or have potentially been exposed to COVID-19.
- **Practice social distancing** at all times, whether on campus or off campus, to reduce transmission.

### **If Exposed, Complete Mandatory Quarantine and Isolation**

Students who test positive for COVID-19, have been exposed to individuals who tested positive for COVID-19, or are informed by a state or local health department, or medical or campus official that they are "at risk" for having COVID-19 may be required to quarantine or isolate. This may include taking classes remotely, and not going to dining halls and other campus facilities. Additional information about restrictions that may be found on [our website](#).

- Students must inform the campus of any known contacts with COVID-19 positive individuals, or of any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or of a positive test result for COVID-19

- Any student, faculty, or staff testing positive for COVID-19 must isolate and follow the New York State Department of Health Order on isolation and the guidance of CCHD on length of an isolation period and the timing of return to campus.
- For spring 2021, Cortland's quarantine and isolation program will be managed by a Q/I Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator who will oversee a team of drivers, delivery personnel, intake managers, student welfare staff, and an information/communications coordinator. The Q/I Coordinators will work closely with UPD, Cortland Auxiliary, Communications, Facilities Operations Services, and Student Health Services.
- SUNY Cortland will have a total of 224 beds at its West Campus Apartment complex available for quarantine and isolation operations. In general, these will be used for on-campus students.
- Off-campus students will isolate or quarantine within their off-campus apartment under the supervision of the Cortland County Health Department.
- Students identified for quarantine and isolation (whether living on-campus or off-campus will have access to certain assistance, such as the delivery of food and medicine. They may also receive psychosocial, academic and/or other supports, as needed.

#### **Follow the Rules or Face Disciplinary Action**

When the campus learns of a violation of the rules associated with COVID-19 safety, students may lose access to campus facilities and/or campus housing. Other disciplinary actions may be taken by the Student Conduct and/or Human Resources Offices. Student conduct is governed by the campus [Student Code of Conduct](#). Minimum sanctions are outlined in the [Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations](#).

Each case will be evaluated and, if warranted, an appropriate and commensurate sanction will be applied. For example, a first-time violation of the on-campus gathering policy will result in removal and restriction from campus with continued academic access for the academic year; a second COVID-19 violation will result in suspension from the institution for the remainder of the current semester and one additional semester.

Consistent with SUNY policy, students who are partially or completely removed from the institution due to a violation are not eligible for refunds.

#### **Take Care of Yourself – Physically and Mentally**

We understand that this is an exceptionally challenging time. SUNY has resources to help you get the support you need. They include:

- Support groups and other peer-to-peer support strategies:
  - **SUNY Cortland's Counseling Center** will offer groups and workshops throughout the semester (Mindfulness Meditation, Increasing Resilience, Mind and Body Compassion, etc.) as well as weekly virtual meetups. Learn more at the [center's website](#);
  - [The SUNY Albany Middle Earth Hotline](#) functions as a peer assistance agency, especially after hours when other services are closed. It is open to all enrolled SUNY students, and students do not have to be in crisis to use their services. For the hotline, call **518-442-5777**. The Hotline is open from noon to midnight Monday through Thursday and 24 hours a day Friday through Sunday on weekends.

- **ThrivingCampus** is a web-based application that students can use to connect to off-campus resources across the state and the nation. [Learn more here.](#)
- Crisis services:
  - **NY State Office of Mental Health** has an Emotional Support Line at **1-844-863-9314** which provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency;
  - **The [Mobile Crisis Team](#)** is available at 607-756-3771 after hours for students who live locally. If you are located outside of Cortland and are having a mental health emergency, the National Suicide Hotline (1-800-273-8255 [TALK]) will connect you to your local mental health crisis unit; and
  - **Text Got5U** to 741741 to reach a crisis counselor on the **Crisis Text Line**. They can provide support but not medical advice.
- Additional resources:
  - [ReachOut SUNY](#) offers a variety of online resources;
  - [Coping with stress, fear and anxiety](#) related to the COVID-19 pandemic through self-awareness and self-care;
  - [How to identify, recognize and cope with stress](#) with some quick and easy tips and techniques that can be implemented anywhere and at any time;
  - [Headspace NY](#) has mindfulness and self-care resources that you may find helpful to sleep better, relax more effectively and be more mindful during this difficult time;
  - [Tips for Managing the Stress of Living with Covid-19](#) is a list of tips for more successfully managing the stress you or others around you may be experiencing due to Covid-19;
  - When stress strikes, self-care often goes by the wayside. Here is some information on [the benefits of self-care and ideas for developing your own self-care practices](#);
  - This blog addresses [how to think about and approach life to promote flexibility and resilience](#) in order to find the opportunities, not just the stressors, associated with physical distancing;
  - A review of various areas of [wellness and self-care](#), along with worksheets you can use to enhance your own personal self-care; and
  - [Grieving the loss of a loved one from COVID-19](#) can be complicated by the physical distance we are asked to experience for the sake of health and safety.

### **Understand What's Being Offered On-Campus and Online**

SUNY Cortland will offer both fully remote, hybrid and in-person classes for the Spring 2021 semester to meet the needs of all our students. Barring unforeseen circumstances, SUNY Cortland plans to offer 40% of courses in a face-to-face format. Students should know:

- All instruction, whether remote, hybrid or face-to-face, will begin on Feb. 1. The revised spring 2021 academic calendar is [now available online](#).
- In accordance with the Chancellor's guidance, SUNY Cortland has not scheduled a spring break nor included any spring holiday periods. There will be two non-instructional "wellness days," one on March 9 and one on April 14.
- As during the Fall 2020 semester, instructional spaces have been reconfigured to limit density and signage is posted throughout academic buildings to promote social distancing. Large classes that could not be accommodated in reconfigured instructional spaces were placed fully online.

- Students and faculty will continue to utilize Blackboard, our learning management system, to ensure access to course content and information. Faculty will also use Teams, WebEx or other platforms to interact virtually with students.
- There will be limited remote instruction prior to the start of the Spring 2021 semester. For instance, there will be a 2-credit hour pre-student teaching seminar offered from Jan. 25 through Feb. 5. Other 1-credit, online courses may be offered.

### **Get Instructional and Technology Help**

SUNY Cortland recognizes that the pandemic presents challenges to academic success and offers a number of resources to help students achieve their goals.

- All students have access to academic advisors for help in navigating their semester through our [Advisement and Transition Office](#).
- [The Learning Center \(TLC\)](#) provides a variety of opportunities for students to discover their learning preferences and build successful academic behaviors.
- Students can find a variety of tutoring and supplemental support options on the university's [tutoring resource page](#).
- A variety of tips, checklists and advice for online learning is available on SUNY Cortland's [Student Resources page](#).

Given the degree to which technology will play a critical role in the Spring 2020 semester, students should seek answers to technological problems promptly.

- For technical assistance at SUNY Cortland contact The Help Center by phone at 607-753-2500 or by email at [thehelpcenter@cortland.edu](mailto:thehelpcenter@cortland.edu).
- General information about the use of technology by SUNY Cortland students is available on the [SUNY Cortland Information Resources webpage](#).

### **Request Accommodations for Disabilities**

Students who wish to disclose covered disabilities and receive reasonable accommodations for their disabilities should contact [SUNY Cortland's Disability Resources Office](#). Students can contact the office by email at [disability.resources@cortland.edu](mailto:disability.resources@cortland.edu), or by phone at 607-753-2967.

### **Follow Housing and Dining Updates**

In order to maintain health and safety in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, all students living on campus need to be aware of important guidelines.

- A residential student may visit the rooms of other students that live in their assigned residence hall. For example, a resident of Alger Hall may visit other residents of Alger Hall. While in that space, all residents must wear a face covering. Students may not visit students in residence halls other than their own assigned hall.
- Student rooms, suites and apartments have a maximum occupancy of residents assigned to them. Residents are allowed to admit only one additional hall resident at a time in their space regardless of the number of residents currently present.

Here are a few examples:

- Double room in Bishop

- Meets guidelines – two residents of the room, plus one other Bishop resident. All students wearing face coverings.
- Does not meet guidelines – one resident of the room, plus two other Bishop residents who do not live there, even if all students are wearing face coverings.
- SUNY Cortland will enforce occupancy guidelines for lounges and kitchenettes:
  - Recreational lounges are limited to no more than three students at a time
  - If a lounge consists of a kitchenette and a lounge space, there should still only be three people occupying the entirety of the space.
  - Kitchenettes are single occupancy
  - Study lounges are single occupancy
  - Laundry rooms are limited to three students at a time
  - Elevators are limited to no more than two students or staff members at a time
- Face coverings will be mandatory for any spaces outside of a student’s room within the residence hall. This includes bathrooms, lounges, kitchenettes, laundry rooms, and other public areas. If a resident, staff member or University Police officer enters a student’s room, the student will be required to wear a face covering throughout the entirety of the visiting person’s visit.
- Updates and university-wide communications will be emailed to all on-campus students via their SUNY Cortland email address. This will be a main source for information on residence hall policies and should be checked regularly.
- Custodial staff will continue their regular cleaning of all common spaces, high touch areas, and bathrooms. Cleaning supplies will also be available in these spaces so that students are able to wipe down areas after usage.
- The university this spring will have a quarantine and isolation coordinator and assistant coordinator who will work with a team of college personnel to quarantine and isolate students as needed at our West Campus Apartments.
- Programming will be offered throughout the semester by hall staff and staff across campus.
- Hall signage was updated during the winter break to include COVID related policies and procedures as well as campus resources. Students should pay attention to new signage and follow directions.

Students can find updated information about the Residence Life and Housing Office’s plans for spring 2021 [on their website](#)

Dining and other services provided by Cortland Auxiliary have also been modified to ensure safety and health during the spring 2021 semester.

- Strict sanitary standards in Cortland Dining will be maintained through the spring. Cortland Auxiliary will adhere to all CDC, NY State and Cortland County codes, regulations and recommendations.
- Residential dining units will have limited seating due to distancing restrictions.
- Students will have take-out options. We successfully implemented mobile ordering (Grub-hub) at Cortland Auxiliary retail locations and will continue to expand and potentially add menu options to this mobile ordering platform.
- In order to optimize social distancing, students will use separate designated entrance and exit pathways at dining facilities.

- Cameras are installed in all the units and feeds are available on our website for students to view and monitor population volume before they go to a dining facility.
- Operating hours may be adjusted in order for all students to be successfully accommodated.
- Waiting lines will allow appropriate social distancing when they form. Dining management will monitor lines and seating to ensure social distancing rules are followed.
- For the spring 2021 semester, Auxiliary will again eliminate self-serve options in the dining units. Items that were previously self-serve in past years, such as salad bars, will continue to be pre-packaged or served by staff.
- All employees will continue to be required to wear masks/appropriate PPE. All customers will be required to wear masks, except when eating.
- Due to the pandemic, outside groups and general public will not be allowed to use residential dining units.
- Cortland Auxiliary will continue to provide take-out meals to any student that requires quarantine and will coordinate with campus to deliver those meals when there is a need.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures have been implemented which include frequent disinfecting of counters, tables and any areas of contact.

#### **If We Have to PAUSE, Follow These Rules**

Under a SUNY-wide directive, any campus with 100 or more positive COVID tests within a designated two-week period must shift to remote education for at least two weeks. If the campus must return to a study-in-place period, the same rules that applied in the fall will be in effect:

- All classes will shift to remote instruction.
- All in-person campus activities, including recreation, athletics, Student Life Center use, student organization events and meetings will be canceled or moved to a virtual format.
- Campus dining will shift to grab-and-go, with no options for indoor seating except for students that have an accommodation established through the Disability Resources Office.
- Campus dining will shift to grab-and-go, with no options for indoor seating except for students that have an accommodation established through the Disability Resources Office.
- No student, regardless of whether they live on-campus or off-campus, should go home or travel to another community during this period in order to eliminate the possibility of infected students carrying the virus to their families and potentially igniting an outbreak in their hometowns.
  - If a residential student chooses to go home during this time, their card access will be removed and they will not be allowed to return to campus housing. They will not be eligible for a refund of housing or meal plan charges.
  - All students, both on campus and off campus, are required to limit their movements outside their residences to essential needs only, such as working jobs, or attending medical appointments or accessing food.
- On-campus students should not visit off-campus student apartments or housing of any kind.
- Students are expected to diligently follow all rules regarding face coverings, physical distancing, gathering in groups and other safety measures, not only on campus, but while they are in the community.

#### **If We Have to Pivot to Remote Instruction, Follow This Plan**

- All in-person instruction will be suspended and delivered in a remote learning format for at least two weeks.

- This suspension includes fine arts and other classes that require extensive hands-on instruction. In these situations, instructors will provide alternative assignments during the 14-day study-in-place period.
- If the study-in-place order is lifted after two weeks, faculty members who previously taught face-to-face classes have the discretion to either return to the classroom or keep the entire class online for the rest of the semester.
- For classes that return to in-person delivery, no option for online-only classes will be provided to individual students who request them.

**Changes and Updates:** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic creates a fluid situation that may require unexpected changes in our response. Updates to scientific knowledge, public health guidance, or laws and regulations may mean SUNY and SUNY Cortland have to make changes to our standards and rules, including those indicated above. SUNY and SUNY Cortland will try to minimize these changes and their impact. We will keep you informed of new developments.

Thank you in advance for everything you are doing and will do to make 2021 safe for you, your fellow students, and the campus community and beyond.