

Subject: SRU outlines fall semester planning

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 2:03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Office of the President

To: SRU Stakeholder

Feb. 24, 2021

To the University Community:

I am writing to share some good news. SRU's fall 2021 plans are coming together, and we expect to return to a more traditional college experience for everyone.

While details are still being refined and are dependent on current infection and vaccination trends, it is clear that our faculty and staff have done extraordinary work in planning and that SRU will return to a sense of normal with the next semester. Thank you to everyone for their hard work.

So, what does "a more traditional college experience" mean? [When classes begin on Aug. 23](#), I expect that we will still be wearing masks when we are together, and we may have to restrict very large gatherings, but we will be together, in person. We expect the experience to include the following:

- Residence halls will be operating at near capacity but with no more than two students to a room. A typical semester sees our campus host 2,800 residential students. In contrast, during the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters, that number has plummeted to around 700. For fall 2021, we expect to have more than 2,300 residents on campus.
- In-person dining will resume.
- We will offer substantially more face-to-face courses, accounting for more than 80% of all instruction versus our current 20% of in-person offerings.
- A return to in-person co-curricular activities.
- Student-athletes will compete in intercollegiate athletic events, and those contests will include some form of fan attendance. As the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference is moving ahead with spring sports, we have every reason to believe that we will have full competition in the fall.
- More employees will be working on campus than working remotely.
- Study-abroad programs will likely recommence as travel restrictions are lifted, albeit with fewer students.

To accommodate more in-person classes, the University is increasing the number of rooms on campus that can more safely host classes. This will include adjusting our learning spaces to feature socially distanced seating configurations and plexiglass barriers. We will also have enhanced cleaning procedures that will not only increase the frequency of cleaning but feature the addition of more than 125 ionization units that have been shown to eliminate 99% of viruses, bacteria, and molds.

Again, our goal is to operate in a more traditional fashion in the fall, one that maximizes in-person opportunities for living, learning, and socializing. Our decision-making is driven by an assumption that most of our community will be vaccinated by the start of classes in August. Still, we will likely need to remain vigilant and continue to practice ongoing mitigation efforts, including mask wearing and on-campus COVID-19 testing.

I know that these past 12 months have been difficult for the vast majority of us – faculty, staff, and students alike – as we’ve all tried to juggle school, work, and other responsibilities. But at the same time, I’ve been impressed by not only the resilience of our community in responding to the pandemic and its many challenges, but also for our collective dedication to our jobs, education, and, most of all, each other. Kudos to all.

I look forward to seeing you all in person on campus in the fall.

Sincerely,

William J. Behre
President