
Subject: COVID-19 UPDATE: Looking Ahead to Spring

Date: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 4:02:19 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: President Lugo

To: AllStudents, Staff-FT-PT, Fulltimefaculty, Adjunct Faculty, Staff-temps, Sponsored

Dear Queens Community,

I hope you are looking forward to spring as much as I am. I know it's not even winter yet, but I long for the days when I will cross paths with you on campus and talk face-to-face. I am so impressed with your resiliency and diligence to continue to learn, grow, and evolve during this highly unusual fall semester.

We are planning to return to campus for the spring semester. I recognize that the pandemic continues to be a threat that creates an enormous amount of uncertainty. I promise you we will do everything we can to return safely and will only change that plan if it is impossible to do so. I know you are all eager to make plans, so I commit to you that I will send monthly emails (at least) between now and the spring semester so you can see how our planning is evolving. As of now, plan to be here for the spring. We are doing the same.

Royal Return 2.0

When we do return, we are pleased to have a strong, thoughtful Royal Return plan to implement. We have the opportunity to make the Royal Return even better based on what we are learning from other universities and organizations. We know many elements of our plan will stay the same:

- We expect to implement our testing plan, which we believe will be possible in the spring as testing becomes more available and affordable, with rapid turnaround.
- We know that physical distancing and face masks are proven preventative measures that will remain part of our return plan.
- We will still be reducing density in the residence halls and offering multiple course modalities to reduce density in the classrooms.
- We will use critical accountability tools like the [community covenant](#) and [daily symptom checker](#). More details on these tools are below.

We Need You

We have seen massive outbreaks among college students across the country. Even universities that have spent millions of dollars on their return plans were forced to resort to massive quarantines or even campus shutdowns. Queens students are not immune. Though not on campus, we are aware of outbreaks among off-campus Queens students. We can and need to do better to protect each other and the rest of our community.

Let these situations be a lesson to us all. Our success hinges on our collective commitment to each other's health and safety. We need accountability among all our community members to keep our campus safe and open. And we will be looking to you to help us create a culture of accountability and care that keeps us on campus. We will be inviting you into the conversation about how we can best create this culture of keeping campus open and keeping each other safe.

Community Covenant Reintroduction

A tool to help us hold each other accountable is the [community covenant](#) introduced in our Royal Return plan. This is our pledge to each other to do the necessary steps to keep our campus safe. We are already using it now for the small number of people who need to access campus. We will use it universally in the spring. It's available for you to [review and sign now](#).

Daily Symptom Checker

We have launched a daily symptom checker in partnership with Novant Health. Anyone who is coming to campus for an approved reason now should complete this form prior to doing so and we will all use this tool daily in the spring. [Bookmark the website now](#). You will fill out this short quiz every day before you come to campus or leave your dorm room.

Residence Life

If you were expecting to live on campus in the fall, there will be a place for you in the spring. Look for more details from the residence life department by late October.

In the Classroom

We plan to have in-person classes available this spring; those courses will be hybrid in order to keep density low and our learning spaces safe. Those students and faculty who are at the highest risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes will have additional options thanks to investments we have been making this fall in enhancing learning technology.

As we look forward to the spring, please engage with me and the senior leadership with your ideas on how we can create a culture of accountability and care. I look forward to hearing from you, and you will be hearing from me again soon. Have a great semester!

Sincerely,
Dan Lugo