

# A HEALTHIER U

Commitment is Contagious

A Comprehensive Plan for a Safe and Healthy Return to Campus

7.26.2020 | VERSION 3



## A HEALTHIER U

Auburn leaders from across the university have worked tirelessly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for the challenges ahead. The result of these efforts is *A Healthier U*, a strategic approach for returning to campus that is designed to foster a safe and healthy environment.

More detailed information can be found in the *A Healthier U* **Academics** and **Student Life** re-entry plans.

*“A Healthier U promotes the health of our campus while minimizing the risk of transmitting COVID-19. It’s an all-in approach for every member of the Auburn Family that recognizes we must be unified and fully committed to new safety protocols.”*

JAY GOGUE, AUBURN PRESIDENT

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To create this comprehensive path forward,  
President Gogue set forth three principles to guide  
every Auburn response to the coronavirus:

1

Prioritize the safety  
and well-being of  
our students, faculty  
and staff

2

Ensure the Auburn  
mission of instruction,  
research and outreach  
continues

3

Follow and  
practice shared  
governance

## A HEALTHIER U: COMMITMENT IS CONTAGIOUS

The pandemic has changed the way we live, and it has taught us in myriad ways the importance of flexibility and responsiveness. As we plan our return to campus, here are a few important things to remember:

- **This plan will evolve.** While this represents our best planning today, we live in a time of great uncertainty. We continue to adhere to the most current information from public health officials and will be informed by our experiences as students, faculty and staff begin their return to campus.
- **The new health and safety measures are essential steps we must take together.** While new protocols may be cumbersome, they are designed to help you and those around you stay well.

By assuming personal responsibility, we are preserving the health of the entire campus and moving closer to an uninterrupted fall semester.

Our campus community has demonstrated a tremendous ability to reimagine ways of teaching, learning and working. The ingenuity and commitment displayed by our students, faculty and staff over the past several months has been nothing short of remarkable, and it reinforces our confidence that Auburn will emerge from the pandemic stronger.



The university's planning process is guided by recommendations from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** and the **Alabama Department of Public Health**. In many instances, Auburn policies go beyond this guidance with the goal of preserving and protecting campus health. To achieve this, we set four priorities:

| 1                                                                        | 2                                                                    | 3                                                          | 4                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Implement a comprehensive process to monitor and safeguard campus health | Strengthen the Auburn student experience in and out of the classroom | Support the campus community as they navigate a new normal | Provide needed resources, clear communications and a plan for the future |

“A dedicated team has worked nonstop the past few months to prepare campus. The best Auburn experience is shared when we are together on campus, but we need everyone’s commitment and cooperation to start and finish the school year strong.”

FRED KAM, MEDICAL DIRECTOR, AUBURN UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CLINIC

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## Require Basic Health Protocols for the Entire Campus

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Every student, faculty and staff member has a role in safeguarding campus health. By adhering to the safety protocols outlined in the *A Healthier U* plan, we can lower the risk of transmitting or contracting COVID-19.

- + **Face coverings are required** inside all university buildings and strongly encouraged in outdoor areas where physical distancing is not feasible.
- + Appropriate **physical distancing** should be maintained everywhere on campus.
- + Everyone is expected to practice **good health etiquette** by washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes and staying home if unwell.



## Self-Screen and Monitor Campus Health Using STAY SAFE TOGETHER

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Auburn will provide a Healthcheck survey designed to support active health and wellness tracking across campus. The survey is a feature of the STAY SAFE TOGETHER™ platform. Healthcheck is a COVID-19 assessment tool that allows individuals to report health status, symptoms and exposure. Students will complete a short screener each day to be cleared to enter campus. Those who report specific conditions will be instructed to contact the Medical Clinic for evaluation and possible testing. The STAY SAFE TOGETHER™ platform will be a vital preventive measure for the entire Auburn community.



## Test Students for COVID-19 to Assess Campus Health

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Students are required to initiate testing for COVID-19 two weeks prior to returning to campus. The information gained will inform campus and community health strategies to help contain the virus and ensure a successful fall semester.

- + Testing is provided by GuideSafe Testing, a **state-funded initiative** led by the **Alabama Department of Public Health** and the **University of Alabama at Birmingham**.
- + Students will be tested at one of multiple locations throughout the state or mailed an at-home testing kit. Testing is free. Each student will receive instructions via email.
- + Students may choose to be tested at an alternative location, but those testing costs are not covered.
- + Find more information about student testing on the **A Healthier U** site, by calling 334-844-6000 or emailing [ahealthieru@auburn.edu](mailto:ahealthieru@auburn.edu).

This year, we unite on the Plains to face our toughest rival yet. Together, we can make 2020 the strongest comeback in Auburn history.

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## Monitor and Safeguard Campus Health Through the Auburn University Medical Clinic

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A dedicated facility for students, faculty and staff, the **Auburn University Medical Clinic** plays an essential role in campus health. As a branch of East Alabama Medical Center, AUMC is uniquely tuned in to regional health and closely monitors the COVID-19 situation on campus.

## Provide Students, Faculty and Staff Tools to Protect Their Health

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Each student registered for a face-to-face class this fall and all faculty and staff members will receive a wellness kit containing items essential for protecting and monitoring their health.

- ✚ A reusable face covering, hand sanitizer and a digital thermometer are included.
- ✚ Additional wellness kits and the items included may be purchased at the bookstore.



As our university prepares for the return of students, faculty and staff this fall, we remain committed to upholding new health and safety measures. It is everyone's responsibility to take the necessary precautions to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

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## Strategically Modify the Fall 2020 Academic Calendar

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To support the health, safety and well-being of the campus and broader community and in anticipation of a possible resurgence of COVID-19 in mid- to late fall, faculty and students are not required to return to campus after Thanksgiving. Specific **changes to the fall academic calendar** include:

- + Fall break and the first two days of Thanksgiving break are replaced with class days.
- + Total instructional days are reduced from 72 to 71, allowing all instruction to conclude before Thanksgiving.
- + Final exams will be administered remotely.
- + Fall commencement is scheduled for Dec. 12, contingent on existing health and safety guidelines.



## Maintain Academic Excellence by Providing Four Instructional Methods

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For fall semester, Auburn will employ four general instructional methods:

- 1 **Face-to-Face:** Courses are conducted in person.
  - 2 **Online:** Courses are conducted entirely online.
  - 3 **Blended:** Some instructional activities are conducted in-person while other instructional activities are conducted online.
  - 4 **HyFlex:** Courses are conducted face-to-face but available online simultaneously.
- Faculty will determine which instructional methods best align with the learning outcomes of their courses.
  - Students can search courses by instructional method and adjust their fall schedules, if desired and seats are available.

## Enhance Safety in Student Spaces

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Campus facilities are being assessed individually to ensure proper health and safety updates are made.

- + Occupancy capacities in all classrooms, laboratories, libraries and gathering spaces have been reduced by 50 percent.
- + Enhanced cleaning procedures are in place, with classrooms disinfected daily. Single-use cleaning products are available in classrooms, dining spaces and other high-traffic areas.
- + Best practices to enhance building air quality are being implemented, including increasing outside air intake, increasing air changes throughout the day and using high-efficiency air filters where possible.

## Changes to Transportation Services Ensure a Safe Ride

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With a focus on safety and accessibility, campus transportation services have enacted the following guidelines:

- + All transportation services should be used for essential trips only. To ensure physical distancing, some services will have limited seating.
- + Passengers must wear a face mask and provide their results from STAY SAFE TOGETHER™ before utilizing university transportation.
- + Passengers are encouraged to take an earlier or later bus to and from campus to avoid overcrowding during peak times.
- + Main office and waiting areas will be restructured to ensure appropriate physical distancing.

## Ensure On-Campus Housing is Safe

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A staged return of students into campus housing is planned to de-densify activities ahead of the first day of classes.

- + The **move-in process** has been streamlined, and a new curbside check-in allows for greater physical distancing.
- + Furniture in common areas has been reconfigured to promote physical distancing. Enhanced and increased cleaning procedures will be used in common areas, and kits of cleaning supplies will be available to students.
- + A block of on-campus isolation rooms is reserved for students who test positive for COVID-19 and need to isolate.

## Implement Changes to Dining Services to Reduce Risk

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Changes to campus dining emphasize safety and convenience.

- + Contactless payment will be available at all locations.
- + Grubhub kiosks will be added for students to place grab-and-go orders. A variety of carry-out options, including meal kits, will be available.
- + Seating capacity has been reduced by 50 percent, and new entry-exit and queuing procedures will be in place. Enhanced cleaning measures are in place and sanitizing wipes are readily available for student use.



## Support the Student Experience While Prioritizing Safety

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The Auburn experience is centered around the campus community, and we are leveraging technology to keep students safe and connected.

- + Welcome Week and other student events will incorporate more outdoor and virtual events to minimize crowds and physical contact.
- + A mobile check-in process using AUinvolve for all events supports contact tracing efforts, if needed.
- + Using **Virtual Student Organization** resources, student organizations can continue even if groups are unable to meet in person.

## Establish Guidelines and Protocols for Safe Events and Group Gatherings

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In-person gatherings are an essential part of the Auburn experience, and we are committed to fostering an environment that allows for group gatherings and events in a safe and responsible way.

- + Single-day events of 50 people or fewer are allowed, provided physical distancing can be maintained. Larger events are subject to approval.
- + Attendees must wear face coverings, have their temperature taken and answer basic health screening questions upon entering. Event planners will collect information useful for contact tracing if needed.
- + **Event guidelines** apply to events through Oct. 10, with very few exceptions. Guidance will be reevaluated to remain aligned with the most current ADPH and **CDC recommendations**.





“The more committed we are to following the new standards, the faster we can get back to enjoying the activities and traditions we know and love.”

BOBBY WOODARD, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

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## Continue Remote Work Contingent upon On-Site Needs

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Through Oct. 10, campus leaders are encouraged to facilitate remote work for employees whose presence is not required on-site.

- + Although **remote work continues**, all campus facilities are open and staffed to maintain operational effectiveness.
- + Some operations lend themselves to remote work more than others, so the transition back to on-site work will not be identical across units.
- + Many employees whose work cannot be completed remotely continue to transition back to campus in phases and on staggered schedules to ensure safety.

## Prepare Campus Work Environments for New Protocols

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- + Enhanced cleaning in all high-touch areas—including restrooms, kitchens, shared workspaces and common areas—that focus on disinfection and sanitation.
- + In shared spaces, cubicle walls are being modified to increase safety in shared or high-traffic workspaces. Sneeze guards are being installed in reception or other high-traffic areas.
- + HVAC modifications are ongoing to increase atmosphere refresh rates.
- + Water fountains are being replaced with touchless bottle fill stations.
- + Clear and direct signage is being installed on campus to convey expected health practices, room occupancies, entry-exit protocols and other specific guidance.

## Procure Equipment and Supplies Needed to Reduce COVID-19 Spread

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- + To increase efficiency, Auburn has **centralized the purchasing and procurement** of all personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies.
- + One reusable face covering will be provided for students, faculty and staff.
- + Face coverings, sanitizer, thermometers and disinfectant wipes will be available for purchase at the bookstore.



## Continue the Auburn Research Mission

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Scientific advancements are in demand, and **Auburn research** leads to breakthroughs that keep us healthy and secure. Because of the key role research plays in pandemic recovery, we have taken steps to ensure Auburn continues to deliver solutions.

- + Remote work is encouraged when appropriate, and investigators are leveraging technology to safeguard their own health as well as that of their participants and fellow researchers.
- + Guidelines for animal research are in place, ensuring care and science continue.
- + The Institutional Biosafety Committee is developing guidance on conducting research on the novel coronavirus.
- + Additional safety protocols are in place in all Auburn laboratories.



Auburn will be on the forefront of implementing new safety and health policies as the situation evolves. We must be open to change and ready to respond at any moment.

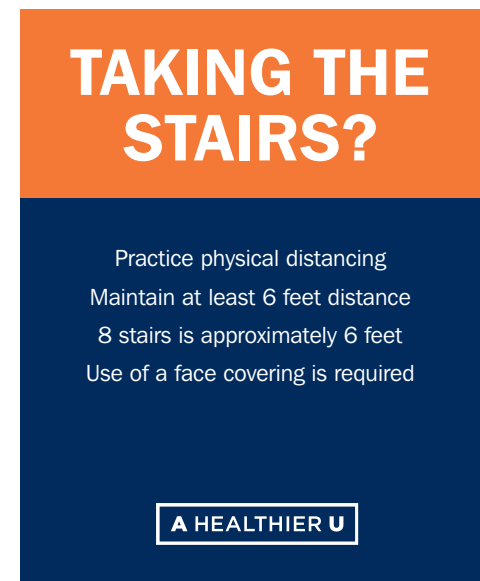
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## Share the Latest Information through Consistent and Clear Communications

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Campus and community resources will be available on the [A Healthier U website](#), including answers to frequently asked questions, signage request forms, [downloadable communication assets](#) and links to additional information.



## Accommodate Employees through a Variety of Leave Options

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The far-reaching effects of the coronavirus have impacted daily life for everyone, and some have experienced circumstances that require special attention.

- + **Auburn Human Resources** continues to accommodate employee needs by leveraging new and existing leave policies, including Emergency Paid Sick Leave, Emergency COVID-19 Administrative Leave and FMLA+.
- + Supervisors should consult the **supervisors guidance materials** from Human Resources about how to handle COVID-19 situations that may arise.
- + The **Auburn Medical Clinic** is dedicated for students, faculty and staff. Anyone with **COVID-19 symptoms** should not come to campus but immediately call 334-844-9825 prior to traveling to the clinic. Faculty and staff are expected to communicate with supervisors and seek approval of any absences for which they are unavailable for work.



## Empower the Transition Back to Campus

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- + Students, faculty and staff are required to **watch a short video** to acknowledge possible safety risks and steps all must take to safeguard campus health.
- + Supervisors should seek guidance from **Risk Management and Safety** for questions about COVID-19 workplace safety and health and **Facilities Management** to request services such as occupancy assessments, office configurations and cleaning.



## Facilitate CARES Act Funding for Students in Need

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Students who incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations caused by the pandemic are eligible for federal financial assistance through the **CARES Act**. Funds will be awarded until they are exhausted. Eligible students should apply online.

## **Prepare for a Possible COVID-19 Resurgence**

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A range of contingency plans are in development for every university unit. Each plan considers multiple scenarios, including those that may warrant a reduced presence on campus. Existing plans and any future modifications will consider surrounding health care scenarios and public health guidance, in addition to campus-specific conditions and capacities.

In the spirit of shared governance, the policies, guidelines and tactics shared in this plan were developed by a group of individuals from across the university tasked with ensuring a safe return to normal campus operations.

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