



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Below are answers to the questions that time did not permit the college to answer during the town hall meeting.

[BACK TO CAMPUS](#)

Several employees have addressed concerns about returning to on-campus work. Thank you for updating spaces with safety protocols. What guidance can we provide as managers and supervisors to those employees with great concerns once more offices begin to open?

We will continue to comply with all CDC guidance and to take every precautionary step necessary to keep the campus healthy. We encourage managers and employees alike to evaluate their work areas and notify your leadership team of any issues or concerns. The college will then determine what can be done (i.e., more Plexiglas barriers; spread employees apart more, etc.) to address the concerns.

What is the plan for employees to return to campus or work from home for the Fall?

The College is working on a return to campus plan. Most employees will be expected to return in the Fall. Each position is being evaluated. Return will be based on specific job duties and functions.

Can we return in a dual capacity? Some days in office and some days online?

Positions are evaluated based on their job duties/job functions. Consequently, if your position is forward facing (interacts with students, employees, community), you will be on campus. If your position does not regularly interact with others, your position will be remote.

Coming back into an in person learning environment: How will faculty be supported to understand student anxiety and social emotional factors that affect learning and working with people who have different points of view?

We have Summer Institute coming up which will have a session offered by Dr. L. Massey, a clinical psychologist in Memphis. She will discuss understanding how mental health, adverse childhood experiences (ACE), and other issues impact the behavior and performance of our students. The registration for Summer Institute is open. It will feature a myriad of sessions aimed at helping faculty support the diverse needs of students. There also are self-paced courses on the College's Bridge platform that will help address working with individuals with diverse viewpoints. Please reach out to the Teaching Academy at teachingacademy@southwest.tn.edu, Amber Patterson at apatterso13@southwest.tn.edu or Jennifer Townes at jtownes1@southwest.tn.edu for more information about how to access courses, register for live training sessions and search course content.

As instructors lecture, the mask will make it hard for students to hear and understand. How will this be handled? Does the instructor remove the mask or is there technology that can be used such as a microphone under the mask?

This has been shared with IT to see if this type of technology exists and to determine the feasibility.

Will Southwest start hiring tutors again for fall semester?

The Academic Support Center has kept tutors employed and serving students throughout the pandemic. Due to all support services being remote, those tutoring appointments were held virtually. As the campus plans a return to operations in the fall, tutoring will be available in face-to-face and virtual options.

What is the policy if someone reports a positive COVID result? If employees have to quarantine, are they required to use sick leave?

Current guidance from the CDC is that you are to quarantine for 10 days. You will be paid during this time from the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA), based on eligibility. Please call HR, Benefits for specific information.

What would be max students in each class with lab?

This will depend on the size of the lab. We will continue to follow CDC/Health guidelines to make that determination.

Can the windows in the Whitehead building Computer Labs be opened to improve ventilation?

Unfortunately, the windows in the Whitehead building computer labs cannot be opened. But please know we are doing everything we can to provide a well-ventilated work area.

Will everyone be required to get a new parking pass?

The permits expire each year on August 31. They need to be renewed, but not replaced. The parking permit process went virtual in 2019.

Will we still have to do the health assessment?

We are currently reviewing CDC guidelines and making plans for the Fall. More information will be released in the future.

Are more entry routes to campus planned for this fall?

We are currently reviewing CDC guidelines and making plans for the Fall. More information will be released in the future.

Will faculty have to teach with masks on?

Everyone on campus is required to wear a mask at this time.

Will the capacity of the class depend upon the size of the classroom?

Yes, some rooms are larger and can accommodate more people.

How will we ensure all the students are screened before they enter the classrooms?

We are currently reviewing CDC guidelines and making plans for the Fall. More information to follow.

How will the computer labs / computers be sanitized between each student's uses?

CDC guidelines continue to evolve. We do not know what will be recommended in the fall. Be assured we will continue to follow the guidelines.

VACCINATIONS

Is TBR requiring vaccinations for attendance?

Vaccinations are encouraged, but not required at this time.

What brand of shots are given out at the Whitehaven and Gill locations?

Both locations currently have the Pfizer vaccine.

Is there availability for employees to volunteer at either vaccination location?

Absolutely, both locations can use volunteers. Please contact Dr. Verneta Boone at vboone@southwest.tn.edu to volunteer at Whitehaven Center. Contact Ron Claxton at rclaxton@southwest.tn.edu to volunteer at Gill Center.

ENROLLMENT

Could the senior team elaborate on the recent article in The Daily Memphian that addressed the fall in student applications for the upcoming fall session?

As you are aware, our primary feeder district remained fully virtual for the majority of the academic year. Not having access to students who typically require high-touch recruitment and enrollment assistance led to declines in applications year over year. We have employed several socially distanced and safe options for enrollment and recruitment activities. We have also engaged schools since their return. At the time of the article, we have deep declines in applications in comparison to last year, once as high as 75 percent. To date, since instituting creative partnering with the local school districts and once again having access to the Senior class, that year over year application count is currently 20.5 percent. Now that we have opened campus operations and tours, we expect that the percentages will close even further.

How can faculty and non-recruitment staff help get enrollment up? We should all help recruiting students?

Thank you very much for this question and the understanding that enrollment is a campus-wide effort. We welcome you to serve as ambassadors in the local community, whether in your places of worship, community centers, or other places you are connected to spread the message of Southwest. We also encourage academic departments to work collaboratively with Recruitment to sponsor recruitment events that center around specific programs. Feel free to reach out to Dr. Shawn Boyd for more specific ways you can get engaged in the recruitment efforts of the college. We have thriving partnerships with many academic departments, engaging in the aforementioned efforts. We welcome more to be involved.

Can students see available courses listed for a given semester?

Yes, as new semester course schedules are opened, students are able to see available courses, as it pulls directly from the Banner system.

Students who have in-person appointments...How many people are allowed with that one student?

If I understand your question correctly, for students coming on campus for appointments, they should be alone, unless parents are needed for the specific purpose of the meeting. For new students or those under a certain age, there are requests for parental information. Therefore, guests of students should simply be allowed on an as-needed basis.

Can we do a virtual or mini graduation for December?

A graduation of any sort, virtual, mini, or large scale, is financially cost-prohibitive and heavily human intensive to plan and execute well. Since the institution charges no graduation fees and ensures this is a special event for the College without placing the financial burden on the backs of students, we operate very prudently in making decisions about adding ceremonies. We also ensure that we are meeting market demands. This year, we have over 1,500 graduates; however, approximately 600 of those students elected to participate in commencement. We will continually monitor market demand, particularly through expressed interest of students electing to participate, and will decide on the number of ceremonies using the data, as we are an Achieving the Dream, data-informed institution.

HR POLICIES & PROCEDURES**What is the policy if someone reports a positive COVID result? If employees have to quarantine, are they required to use sick leave?**

Current guidance from the CDC is that you are to quarantine for 10 days. You will be paid during this time from the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA), based on eligibility. Please call HR, Benefits for specific information.

Any information about pay for adjuncts?

There have been no changes to pay for adjuncts.

Is everyone's job being evaluated? Southwest has one of the lowest pay for employees but we're in the top 4 for enrollment. How can or will Southwest be doing something to increase pay to be equitable or on the same level of other TBR institutions. This will not only boost morale, but also retain dedicated employees.

The College is evaluating its compensation process and has submitted a new compensation plan to TBR for review and approval. Once approved, we will make compensation adjustments as funds permit. In recent years, we have increased the living wage, made faculty compensation adjustments and have begun evaluating staff positions.

What's the latest status on salary cuts and the hiring of new employees? Since new employees are being hired in certain areas, is the freezing hire over?

Positions are still being evaluated and are posted on an "as needed" basis only. The College has continued to work hard to be fiscally responsible in order to minimize salary cuts and furloughs. It will continue to do everything possible so employees are not impacted, to the extent possible.

Except for high level positions, can HR start posting the salary range for a posted position? This is sometimes problematic because candidates do not know the salary or the salary range. Therefore, candidates apply for a position that they would not have applied for if they knew the salary or salary range. Also, it becomes a waste of time to interview those applicants, knowing that we can't offer or come close to the salary that the applicant is asking for.

We agree. For this reason, part of the many changes in Human Resources will include the posting of salary ranges.

What will be done to boost the morale of current dedicated employees? Seems the Huron study doesn't really mean anything to the ones at the bottom. The same speech is presented every year. Nothing has yet been put into place monetarily.

Actually, because of the study, we increased our living wage to \$12.24/hr. We also provided bonuses to all employees for two years in a row (before COVID-19) and will continue to evaluate positions and make changes, as funds become available. The College remains committed to assessing employee compensation and will utilize the resources available to make the changes needed.