Farmingdale State College Academic Continuity and the Health and Safety of Students, Faculty, and Staff Policy for Spring Term 2021

2/4/2021

Introduction and Overview

Farmingdale State College will dramatically expand upon its fall 2020 return plan, which proved highly effective. In spring 2021, the College continues to limit the number of courses on campus and expects approximately 15% of its instruction to be delivered in face to face format. Students understandably prefer in-person delivery. For that reason, the College has modestly increased the share of courses delivered via face to face instruction. However, FSC invested heavily (over $1.5M) in delivering quality remote instruction and has a team of faculty mentors who work with colleagues to assist in delivering quality, interactive courses. The College continues to limit its residential population to 100 or fewer students (each with singles and individual bathrooms) and is subsidizing the food service to insure the best possible student experience. Farmingdale is adding or reassigning up to a dozen staff members to assure that the return to campus testing plan is fully implemented. Information Technology is creating a portal through which students will submit quarantine attestations and confirmation of pre-semester testing. FSC displayed the What Students Should Know information prominently on the homepage of the College’s website and will communicate this information directly to students and their families. Our COVID Hub webpage has been thoroughly updated for the spring 21 term. In addition, spring 21 testing requirements have been communicated to the campus through multiple means.

The College has approximately 70 residential students who will return to our residence hall on January 22, 2021. For spring 2021, FSC expects approximately 2,200 non-residential students to have a campus presence. Farmingdale has about 1,400 employees of whom approximately 500 will have an on-campus presence. The student data are premised on a detailed review of course enrollments effective January 25, 2021. Employee data are based on the number of faculty and staff authorized to return to work on campus per the College plan.

1. **COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring**

   A. **Departing Campus in Fall**

   The campus previously submitted, and is now implementing its approved plan for testing and monitoring departing students.

   B. **Students Remaining on Campus**

   The College requires students to apply in order to remain in campus housing during the intersession period. Priority is given to students with documented homelessness or home insecurity issues and international students. The Campus Mental Health Center will be available and Health & Wellness will maintain operational hours. COVID-19 testing will be done weekly for those students who
remain on campus. Orchard Hall—the only residential facility that remains open—has meal preparation facilities (kitchens) available. Resident Directors will remain on site and will assist with monitoring physical and mental health. Communication to the approved occupants will provide full details regarding expectations and services inclusive of the need to undergo a precautionary quarantine in their residential rooms preceding the start of the semester. Student Affairs uses SLATE to execute the housing agreement so that an electronic record will exist. The College will follow the quarantine and isolation protocol previously established and implemented. Should a student require isolation/quarantine, all provisions of the Continuity of Care for Residential Students plan will remain in place.

The Health and Wellness Center will conduct surveillance COVID-19 testing via PCR nasal swabs for students and staff who remain on campus over the intersession. Telehealth services will be available. In-person appointments will be arranged on a case-by-case basis, as needed. Emergencies will be managed by University Police officers who are all licensed EMT’s.

C. Returning to Campus for Winter and Spring Terms Testing and Isolation Requirements

Screening

Students, faculty and staff with an on-campus presence must complete the health screening tool every day (including days on which they are not expected on campus) for the entirety of the semester. Students, faculty, and staff must begin completing the health screening tool 14 days prior to their first day on campus. This tool includes information on recent travel history. Those students who are attending classes solely in a remote format, and do not come to campus for any purpose, are not required to fill out the screening tool.

Return to Campus – Testing and Isolation Requirements

As in fall 2020, the College will require students to complete a pre-arrival agreement that outlines campus policies around screening, test, travel, compliance with face mask, distancing and other obligations. Further, all students who will have an on-campus footprint must also complete a precautionary 7-day quarantine prior to their return to campus.

Limited exceptions to the precautionary quarantine requirement are provided per the SUNY Guidance of December 4, 2020. Medical School and Health Professions students designated as “essential employees” will not be required to quarantine. Commuter students who are employed outside of the campus may apply to the campus designee for a limited exemption to allow them to work during the quarantine. To qualify for the exemption, such students will need to document the COVID-19 safety protocols of their employers. Also, the exemption
will only apply to their ability to work. When not working, the students will be expected to quarantine from others. FSC will keep specific information on the number of exemptions approved for the semester and be able to report to SUNY system.

All students who will have an on-campus footprint which includes: (1) any student who lives on campus (2) takes at least one class on campus (3) utilize services on campus (e.g., library, gym, dining), or (4) work on campus must present evidence of a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test taken within three days prior to return to campus or present documentation of a positive diagnostic result for COVID-19 from the prior 3-month period. Students who fail to do so must submit to campus testing—with a negative result no later than five days following their return to campus.

Staff and faculty are also strongly encouraged to be tested in the same timeline as our student population.

To assure compliance with the pre-semester quarantine and testing obligations, Farmingdale is creating a campus portal through which students will submit attestation that they have satisfied the pre-semester quarantine requirements and submit test results prior to arriving on campus.

**Regular Surveillance Testing**

Beginning, January 26, FSC will commence weekly testing of all students, staff, and faculty with a regular on campus presence using pooled saliva surveillance. The College will conduct testing five (5) days each week during the spring 2021 term and is planning to offer evening hours. These samples will be collected by FSC staff trained in the collection process, and the samples will be sent to SUNY Upstate Medical Center for laboratory processing. A secure online portal has been developed for students to submit their COVID-19 diagnostic results obtained off campus during the 3–5-day period prior to the start of their on-campus presence. A complete roster of all students with an in-person campus footprint will be cross-referenced with students who successfully submit COVID results from an outside provider in the student portal to identify those students who will be required to undergo pooled saliva testing over the first five (5) days of the semester.

FSC is reassigning employees to assist with testing and has hired nine new employees to assist at the pooled testing site to ensure that the college is fully capable of implementing surveillance testing as outlined in our previously approved surveillance testing plan. These employees are now trained to assist our Health and Wellness Center who are overseeing the testing process. In addition, students and faculty from the College’s Nursing Department are assisting with surveillance testing.
All residential students and students who have a regular on-campus footprint are required to comply with FSC’s previously approved surveillance testing protocol. Specifically, for the spring 2021 semester, the College will require all students with an on-campus presence to undergo weekly pooled saliva surveillance testing regardless of campus or community prevalence rates.

FSC will follow Center of Disease Control Protocols on testing, screening, and outbreak response for institutions of higher learning.

Students, faculty, and staff who have traveled to or from restricted states, regions, or international locations must follow the New York State Travel Advisory and notify the campus of any such travel on the daily health screening tool. FSC will advise students, staff and faculty that those who fall under a travel restriction must attest to same and fill out the New York State Traveler Health form.

All students, faculty and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate and follow NY State DOH orders regarding the length of the quarantine and timing of their return to campus. In the absence of DOH guidance, all students, faculty or staff must isolate according to recommendation from the Health and Wellness Center or Human Resources

FSC has 10 isolation rooms available for immediate use for a residential population of 100 students. Should the need arise for additional isolation space; the campus has the ability to quickly add capacity in vacant residence halls.

2. **Mode of Instruction**

A. **Winter 2020-21 term**

All winter courses will be delivered in remote format with the exception of seven flight blocks for Aeronautical/Professional Pilot students. Each flight block consists of 20 students.

B. **Spring 2021 term**

Farmingdale previously submitted plans to offer a very limited number of courses on-campus prior to February 1. The College plans to offer 37 course sections on January 29 and 30, 2021. One-quarter (11 sections) of these are two-hour flight block times for Professional Pilot students who require flight time to meet licensure, instrumentation, and certification requirements. Seven sections are in the Biological Sciences where laboratory proficiency is fundamental to student success. Five sections in Dental Hygiene are focused on radiology, anesthesia, and clinical practice courses needed to develop specific skills necessary to provide comprehensive dental hygiene care. Five in Nursing include a Health Assessment Lab and a Clinical and Theory Lab Simulation—both are directly linked to the program outcome of making evidence-based clinical judgments to provide therapeutic nursing care interventions for patients throughout their
lifespan. Four Architecture and Construction sections are required by the program to demonstrate the ability to design systems, components, processes, procedures, or programs meeting specified needs for broadly-defined engineering, technical, or scientific problems. Four Automotive courses include courses in transmission, computerized controls, suspension, and auto bodies. All are required to be able to maintain the necessary knowledge to operate within all areas of land, sea, and ground support vehicles, equipment, facilities, service and operations. With very slight modification, the plan was approved by the SUNY Office of the Provost.

In fall 2020 the College distributed a pre-arrival agreement with a list of expectations to all students and required acknowledgement, and will do so again in January. Given that FSC has limited itself to only 100 residential students and 15% of classes with an on-campus presence, a pause or reversion to entirely remote can be seamlessly executed. Farmingdale State College’s Spring Pre-Arrival Agreement will be distributed by mid-January.

Mandatory Pause

A mandatory pause will have a relatively limited impact on FSC given that 85% of classes are delivered via remote instruction and the College will have only 70 residential students. However, if, the campus were obligated to move entirely to remote course delivery for a portion or the entire balance of the term the College will impose the following restrictions on campus activities: campus dining and food service options will be converted to takeout or delivery only; in-person athletics, extracurricular programs and non-essential student activities will be suspended. Some essential, in-person student services (medical care, mental health counseling) will not be suspended but will be delivered on a call-ahead or appointment only basis. The one operating residence hall will remain open. Those students who have been identified as having been in contact with a positive case will be required to quarantine and those students who test positive will be required to isolate. The College, per its fall plan and its Continuity of Care Plan, has ample space and facilities for quarantine or isolation purposes.

If, at any point, the campus shift to entirely remote instruction for a portion or the balance of the term the College expects that full residential services will to be offered to students who choose to stay. Therefore, it is not expected that students will be provided refunds.

C. Remote Instruction

Transparency

The vast majority of FSC classes (85%) will continue to be delivered remotely in spring 2021. We have directly informed parents and students of same, including a letter sent via email to about 7,000 families. Most students already know the modes of delivery for their specific courses as they have been creating spring
2021 schedule for some weeks. Over 5500 have scheduled for spring 2021. The campus will use its COVID hub on our website, as well as pre-semester communication to reinforce this, and will directly distribute its What Students Should Know information to all students prior to January 15, 2021.

Regular Interaction

All instructors will utilize the Blackboard Learning Management system to communicate with students on a regular basis including the posting of the course syllabus and course expectations. Remote class sessions will utilize one of the supported web conferencing platforms for instruction including Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams, and/or Google Meets. Each of these remote teaching platforms provide for opportunities to engage students in the academic environment. A guidance document will be sent to all faculty teaching in the spring term outlining the institutions expectations regarding substantive student interaction. Information Technology will continue the Laptop Loan Program for students with financial need. New students will receive explicit communications regarding rapid onboarding and orientation prior to the beginning of the spring semester to ensure that they are up to speed and ready for the semester. Both the Distance Learning and the IT Help Desks are equipped to run independent of campus open/closed status and are ready to support all faculty and student remote instruction needs.

International Students

We will have 20 international students as part of the student body in the spring 2021 semester. Of these 15 will be residing on or near the Farmingdale campus and 5 will be attending remotely from their home campus. The students who will be remote have academic schedules that include early morning or late evening class times associated with their unique time zones.

Substantive Interaction

Farmingdale State College is committed to ensuring that there is substantive interactions with students throughout the teaching and learning process. All of our courses have been prepared to utilize an engaged approach to learning consistent with the content area. Faculty resources and professional development opportunities have been established to assist faculty in all areas of remote type instruction. Furthermore, FSC has closely monitored the quality of its remote offerings since spring 2020 with two comprehensive surveys of students and faculty, both of which generated very high response rates. The most recent survey was completed in October-November of 2020 to help prepare for the winter and spring 2021 terms. Two-thirds or more of 3,500 student responders expressed satisfaction with the level of engagement of remote classes and overall satisfaction with remote classes. Over 90% of respondents indicated overall satisfaction with the service of the distance learning help desk.
This spring, all FSC students will have access to CircleIn, a new student engagement app that lets our students study together remotely, collaborate with their peers in order to exchange ideas, and stay productive. Students logging into CircleIn on their mobile devices or desktop computers will find their courses pre-populated and will be able to reach out to their classmates to share class notes, ask each other questions, set up chat or video study sessions, create and share flash cards, and more.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Services continues to work with students who need additional supports. The process has continued without interruption and has provided the necessary alerts and guidance to faculty when a student needs an accommodation.

Orientation/Training

Farmingdale’s IT and Distance Learning office have delivered over 150 workshops for faculty since March 2020 with over 1300 participants. IT and DL have worked together to develop goals for further improving remote instruction and the quality of remote course interactions and engagement for spring 2021. This includes examining the use of VoiceThread and LinkedIn Learning to promote engagement. VoiceThread is an online platform that allows you to put digital media such as images, videos, and documents at the center of an asynchronous conversation. Through the Blackboard integration, faculty and student accounts are created automatically when courses are linked to VoiceThread. Distance Learning will also use Genius SIS to centralize, register, and manage faculty training and professional development programs. As part of a “spring training 2021 plan”, DL and IT are offering new trainings on student engagement techniques and online pedagogy, and creating a team of fifteen faculty peer mentors to work with colleagues on implementing best practices in remote delivery. Additionally, the College’s Center for Teaching and Learning Technology will continue to deliver programming, including peer-led workshops and seminars on distance pedagogy and engaging students. IT and DL will provide additional live, virtual and pre-recorded training sessions in January 2021 that will include the use of tools such as breakout rooms and private chats to enhance the level of engagement and interaction. The Office of Distance Learning provides a very comprehensive Online Student Resources web site as well as encouraging use of the SUNY online orientation.

Advising

The Academic Advisement and Information Center has continued its work utilizing remote advisement appointments through the software system “Bookings”. In addition, the institution has launched the use of CRM Advise,
which helps to streamline advisement practices utilizing electronic files with note capture capabilities. All academic departments utilizing faculty advisors have regular virtual office hours to facilitate student advisement.

3. **Academic Calendar**

   A. **Spring Term Start Dates** See Spring 2021 section above

   The College’s plan for courses meeting prior to February 1, 2021 was previously submitted to the Provost’s office.

   B. **Spring Break**

   The College’s calendar for spring 2021 has been amended to eliminate the spring break period.

   C. **Commencement**

   Farmingdale is conducting four pre-recorded virtual commencement ceremonies in January 2021 for winter graduates. For spring 2021 it is likely the College will replicate the highly successful Car-mencement ceremony that occurred in June 2020.

4. **On-campus Activities**

   A. **Federal, State and Local Guidance**

   Consistent with state, federal, and other guidance, the College intends to hold a very limited number of on-campus activities in spring 2020. Some student activities, such as drive-in movies, and outdoor recreation events may be scheduled. In each case, staff supervision will be present and physical distancing will be maintained. Face-coverings and others safety requirements are to be rigorously enforced. No externally sponsored on-campus activity will be permitted.

   The campus submitted a comprehensive summary of cleaning and testing consistent with NYS requirements in fall 2020. The College’s Custodial Department provides the Administration with daily reports on spaces and cleaning procedures.

   B. **Face Coverings (Masks) and physical distancing**

   Face coverings (masks) must be worn by all members of the campus community on campus at all times, including in classrooms, conference rooms and other spaces, even when six-feet social distancing exists. Exceptions to mask wearing include when students are (1) in their private residential or personal space, (2) eating meals on- campus while seated and social distancing is appropriately enforced, or (3) by themselves. Faculty and staff are likewise exempt when alone in their office or other space. Any request for a medical, religious, or other
accommodation to this policy should be reviewed on an individual basis in accordance with relevant laws and campus procedures.

The College adopted and enforced such a policy beginning in spring 2020. This policy will be continued and compliance has been high. The policy will continue through spring 2021.

C. Compliance

The College advised all students of the Chancellor’s Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations in fall. Through the dean of students and residence life offices, students who failed to comply with College requirements, including failure to report for testing and violations of residence hall COVID policies were subject to dismissal from their campus residence. For the spring, the assistant dean of students has developed a dashboard to be shared by Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and the Registrar that will monitor each student’s compliance with the weekly testing requirement.

The Division of Student Affairs maintains responsibility for implementing compliance and the College continues to communicate expectations on a recurring basis through social media, email, the COVID Hub and other media, including the campus radio station.

Building upon the experience gained last year, FSC will enhance testing compliance by making use of new digital platforms. Slate, a Customer Relationship Management tool, will allow the College to track student testing compliance in real-time, sending targeted and personalized reminder emails, text messages, and robocalls. As necessary, College staff will connect with students who miss one appointment. FSC continues strictly enforcing SUNY’s Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations Policy. Any students with a regular on-campus presence who fail to appear for testing in two consecutive weeks will be suspended from on-campus classes until they have met the College and SUNY testing requirement. If necessary, the College will undertake disciplinary action, including interim suspension and formal charges, pursuant to FSC's Student Code of Conduct. Faculty members will receive regular updates via email regarding non-compliant students. Academic Affairs has informed faculty that they may receive COVID-19 compliance communications. As noted, students have received multiple communications reiterating the testing expectations.

FSC's centralized student behaviors' database, Maxient, will help the College manage non-compliance records, share information across campus sectors and identify repeat offenders. FSC's Students of Concern Committee (SCC) will identify, assess, and address problematic COVID-19 student behaviors (e.g., a student's refusal to wear a protective face mask on-campus). Individuals can file an SCC report electronically by completing a simple online form. Through this
aggressive and multi-disciplinary compliance program, FSC's well-positioned to address the public health realities that necessitate these protocols.

D. Mental Health Supports, Services and Referrals

Campus Mental Health Services (CMHS) remains committed to providing a full range of clinical services to the Farmingdale State College student community as they continue to adjust to evolving learning formats and the challenges posed by this pandemic. CMHS will be providing telehealth appointments as well as a variety of educational informative outreach programs focusing on personal well-being and coping skills. All currently registered students are eligible to receive these services. In addition to the services offered by the Center, appropriate referrals will be made to local, state, and national resources which include but are not limited to AA, LICADD, Access, LIGALY, Departments of Social Services, ReachOut SUNY, Thriving Campus, Middle Earth from the University at Albany as well as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, National Domestic Violence Hotline, SAMHSA National Helpline and its Behavioral Health Treatment Locator.

5. Reporting

A. Daily Dashboard

FSC removed its campus dashboard in November and now links exclusively to the SUNY dashboard. Campus data are reported to the SUNY Dashboard daily by 4 PM.

B. Instructional Modalities The campus will use Banner for tracking purposes so that should an instructor modify the mode of instruction the campus can readily identify and report it.

6. What Students Should Know: Transparency As noted above, the College will require students to complete a pre-arrival agreement as was done in fall. This agreement will outline student rights and expectations for spring 2021. The College will post its What Students Should Know notice prominently on its homepage and will inform students and families that this information is posted and available. The president’s cabinet is convening in mid-December to finalize a communication plan that will use multiple forms of contact to inform students and families of expectations, rights and responsibilities for the spring term.