VIRGINIA TECH FALL 2020 COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN

July 2020

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1. PLAN

1.1. PURPOSE

This plan serves as a foundation upon which to build a safe, effective, and cogent strategic path from a status of essential operations to full operations within the context of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. This novel coronavirus pandemic has been dynamic and challenging to the Virginia Tech community and the institution. This plan recognizes the many unknowns in the public health realm, and balances those with the knowns in higher education: community, innovation, and resiliency. This plan provides specific approaches and mitigation strategies to optimize the educational and research experiences with currently known public health guidance, on-campus impacts of the fall 2020 semester, and the projected impacts of COVID-19 through the end of calendar year 2020.

1.2. DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this plan has been prepared for use by Virginia Tech. The information provided herein is operational guidance, recognizing that individual circumstance or events not anticipated by the plan may occur. The experience and judgment of those using the plan is an important consideration in how and when the plan is used. No warranty, guarantee, or representation is made by the university of the sufficiency of the information contained herein and the university assumes no responsibility in connection therewith. This plan is intended to provide guidelines for safe practices; therefore, it cannot be assumed that all plausible and non-plausible scenarios have been addressed in this document, or that other or additional information or measures may be required.

2. PRINCIPLES

The principles listed below are guiding Virginia Tech's decisions with respect to a fall semester, balancing a traditional Virginia Tech experience with safety and well-being of the community in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We affirm our highest priority is operating in as safe a manner as possible, and we are committed to science and the recommended public health practices as we transition to an on-campus learning and research environment.
- We remain committed to our tripartite teaching, research, and outreach mission and its transformational impacts on the intellectual development of students and the economic vitality of the communities that we serve.
- We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and reaffirm the Principles of Community and InclusiveVT, our individual and collective commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence.
- We are guided by the values and aspirations expressed in our strategic plan, "The Virginia Tech Difference – Advancing Beyond Boundaries."
- We acknowledge the value of the Virginia Tech student experience.
- We continue to rely on internal and external input from a wide array of stakeholders to guide our holistic, principles-based approach to the fall semester.
- We pledge to communicate in a transparent, authentic, and timely manner so that all of Virginia Tech's stakeholders can make informed decisions as we meet the challenges ahead.
- We will make informed, data-driven decisions and operate within our resource capacity.
- We will be flexible and prepared, with resiliency and a sense of service that permeates the Hokie Nation.

3. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1. VIRGINIA TECH INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Virginia Tech Incident Management Team (VT IMT) is tasked and trained to address emergency incidents that affect the campus community, disrupt operations, and require innovative and novel solutions. The VT IMT has existed in its current format since 2014, training and exercising on incident response and management multiple times per year to maintain proficiency and develop new skillsets. The membership of the team and additional information about the team as a key organizational tool for incident response and management can be found in the Virginia Tech Crisis and Emergency Management Plan.

The VT IMT has been meeting continuously since early March when the team was activated in response to what is now known as the COVID-19 global pandemic. The VT IMT serves to coordinate response actions across the Virginia Tech enterprise, support leadership decision-making, document the incident, and collect and share data to appropriate stakeholders. The VT IMT will continue to serve in this role throughout the response and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic until the unit is demobilized with approval from university executive leadership.

3.2. PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Virginia Tech has worked with many external partners and stakeholders throughout the incident, and will actively engage with and maintain these relationships for the duration. Primary among them are the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the Town of Blacksburg, and Montgomery County (Virginia).

Through various mechanisms (including the New River Valley Public Health Task Force), Virginia Tech will continue to liaise with stakeholders in the development, implementation, and assessment of operational initiatives. Virginia Tech works closely with the New River Valley Health District, (540-585-3300). Interactions occur through several channels, including the New River Valley Public Health Task Force, the Virginia Tech Schiffert Health Center and the inclusion of the New River Health District epidemiologists on university work groups such as; testing, tracing and case management; development of attestation and contact tracing tools; and impact modeling. University personnel involved with COVID-19 health related issues have 24/7 direct access to New River Health District personnel. Procedures are historically in place to coordinate health department and university responses to all communicable diseases including COVID-19. These procedures have been enhanced to manage the specific challenges of the COVID-19 virus. As Virginia Tech becomes aware of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, SHC, or occupational health staff from the Environmental Health and Safety office (EHS) will notify the VDH to coordinate contact-tracing and provide additional information as requested (please note, the physician/health care provider is responsible for this immediate, confidential morbidity report to the VDH). If a cluster of cases is identified by the VDH, the SHC, and the Case Management Team will support local health department efforts to identify the at-risk population. Virginia Tech has established a Case Management Team to provide support to VDH contact-tracing efforts, provide service, and streamline the process for those seeking support from the university across multiple areas. The Case Management Team will support all community members, inform monitoring, and eliminate duplication of efforts for those in isolation or quarantine. Medical professionals from EHS

(Occupational Health) and SHC will act as liaisons to the VDH. In addition, team members will assist with outreach to students identified as contacts, as requested by the NRHD, including coordinating medical evaluation for residential students through SHC.

Given the complexities of such a broadly impacting incident, and the number of stakeholders involved, it is imperative that specific processes and assigned responsibilities facilitate communications between the various entities.

Key regional stakeholders and partners include:
- Virginia Department of Health
- New River Health District
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Town of Blacksburg
- Montgomery County (Virginia)
- Radford University

Virginia Tech will maintain a close and consistent relationship with the New River Health District throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To accomplish this, the Associate Vice President for Campus Safety and Security and Assistant Vice President for Emergency Management will serve as the points of contact for Virginia Tech, communicating directly with the Director and Epidemiologist of the New River Health District.

In addition, Virginia Tech has representatives on the New River Valley Public Health Task Force, enabling the university to liaise with representatives of surrounding communities, including key regional stakeholders and partners. The New River Valley Public Health Task Force also serves as a mechanism for communication between the surrounding communities and university.

The New River Valley Public Health Task Force (https://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/ departments/mc-news/2020/03/06/informational-resources-for-covid-19-(coronavirus), convened in March of 2020, comprises the New River Health District of the Virginia Department of Health; Lewis Gale Hospital Montgomery; Carilion New River Valley Medical Center; Emergency Services from Montgomery County, and the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg; New River Valley Community Services; Montgomery County Public Schools; Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University; and Radford University. The Public Health Task Force meets multiple times per week, and conducts COVID-19 testing within the Health District. Moreover, the Task Force works to support outreach and facilitate interagency coordination in response to the global pandemic. Virginia Tech has three members on the Task Force representing public safety and communications. Virginia Tech lead representative is the Associate Vice President for Safety and Security who maintains an active role with the Task Force.

4. RETURN TO CAMPUS
The Virginia Tech community has consistently demonstrated resilience in response to the many disruptions and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid response of the community to shift instruction, research, and service consistent with public health requirements epitomizes the spirit of the Hokie Nation. As Virginia Tech prepares to return to the campus, this community-wide

resilience will again be necessary. The plan for re-engaging as a community on-campus is predicated on a commitment to the Hokie Spirit of service, inclusivity, tolerance, and understanding.

A small and dedicated part of the community has continued to work throughout the pandemic to maintain essential operations, plan, and implement an approach to phasing back operations in accordance with federal, state, and local guidance. The plan for returning to campus includes methods for surveillance and monitoring and paces operations with current public health indicators.

The students, staff, and faculty of Virginia Tech will normalize a new manner in which we learn, teach, conduct research, provide outreach, and engage with one another. This will require the commitment of the entire community and respect for fellow Hokies. To continue to foster and support community, Virginia Tech has identified and created resources for all community members (vt.edu/ready). Virginia Tech will implement operations to promote successful instruction, learning, research, and working environments. The success of this plan will require the dedication of the entire community and the willingness to overcome individual challenges in support of one another.

4.1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Virginia Tech will provide a virtual COVID-19 training course to promote accurate education on the disease, physical distancing, and recommended hygiene. This training course will include a general overview of COVID-19 and university-specific COVID-19 policies and practices, along with the associated expectations for all community members. This virtual, asynchronous training will include the following elements:
- Education about the virus/disease
- Physical distancing
- Hygiene practices
- Related university policies/practices
- PPE versus protection and face coverings
- Resources available for students and employees
- Legal aspects
- Overview of the testing/tracing process
- Staying informed
- Anti-stigma issues

All members of the community returning to campus will be required to complete the training prior to their return. Community members who have been operating on-campus throughout reduced and essential operations will be required to complete the training within three weeks of its availability. Completion of the training will be monitored by the Department of Human Resources for faculty and staff, the Graduate School for graduate students, and the Division of Student Affairs for undergraduate students. Community members failing to complete the training on time will be reminded of this requirement through the first week of instruction. Virginia Tech will follow existing guidelines and processes for disciplinary action for students and employees who fail to comply with university or state requirements.

4.2. PHYSICAL DISTANCING & HYGIENE

4.2.1. General

Individual actions of community members will have the greatest potential to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Virginia Tech will work to support and encourage the adoption of the most current public

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health guidance and the following mitigation strategies as the community returns to campus. In combination with this plan, Virginia Tech created a website (vt.edu/ready) dedicated to supporting the community's understanding of these concepts. Strict adherence to appropriate physical distancing requirements throughout each phase of the recovery process is necessary. Virginia Tech will promote proper hygiene practices for the whole community.

4.2.2. General Strategies

In recognition of public health guidance to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19, Virginia Tech community members are expected to:

- Stay at/in their residences when ill, or return to their place of residence if they become ill.
- Wear face coverings/masks when in public or common areas, including indoor spaces (e.g., classrooms, laboratories, meeting/conference rooms, dining halls, residence halls, student centers, library, hallways, lounges, atria, and other gathering points), unless physical distancing is easily accomplished, such as in a private office or space with greatly reduced occupancy, as well as cubicles where there are physical barriers between each occupant, provided occupants don a face covering/mask upon standing.
- Use of face shields is expected for the following situations:
   - 1) Any person seeking to communicate with the hearing impaired and for which the mouth needs to be visible, precluding a face covering/mask;
   - 2) Persons with health conditions that prohibit wearing a face covering. Nothing in this document shall require the use of a face covering by any person for whom doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition;
   - 3) Lecturers in lieu of a face covering/mask, provided physical distances are maintained.
- Maintain at least a 6-foot physical distance from every person present at a location whenever possible. This includes hallways, atria, lounges, study spaces, and other gathering points.
- Wear a face covering/mask when a consistent 6-foot separation distance cannot be maintained.
- Use appropriate barrier protection when a minimum of 6 feet of separation is not possible and people must face each other, such as highly visited areas (reception desks and other check-in points).
- Conduct meetings virtually when possible, and limit occupancy when virtual meetings are not possible. Where permissible, and weather-permitting, meetings may be conducted outside, while complying with required physical distancing and hygiene standards.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible, or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover coughs or sneezes — cough into the sleeve or elbow, not into the hands.
- Regularly clean high-touch surfaces.
- Avoid shaking hands.

4.2.3. Face Coverings/Masks

Each member of the Virginia Tech community is expected to use a face covering/mask while on campus according to, and subject to, public health guidance. Face coverings/masks should provide a good, comfortable fit. Because cloth face coverings are washable, reusable, and inexpensive to make, they are recommended. Coverings that fit close to the face with no loose edges are the safest choice to use in labs/research spaces, shops, and similar spaces. Homemade and cloth face coverings should have several layers of fabric for added filtration. Face coverings will be provided to students and employees if they do not have their own.

4.3. PHYSICAL DISTANCING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL AND LABORATORY SETTINGS

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4.3.1. *Instructional Settings*

Virginia Tech will maintain a 50-person limit in confined spaces for instructional classrooms and laboratories with specified physical-distancing guidelines in effect through the fall semester. Instructional studio spaces will adhere to 6-foot physical-distancing guidelines. An exception to the 50-person limit requirement may be requested through the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. All requests for an exception must demonstrate compliance with Virginia Tech physical-distancing requirements. Given that the indoor gathering size will be limited through the fall, large lecture classes will be offered with reduced in-person attendance and in online synchronous and asynchronous modes. Smaller lectures, sections, and laboratories will be offered in person, providing that the spaces allow for proper distancing.

The Virginia Tech community is expected to practice physical distancing and hygiene strategies for indoor spaces on campus to reduce exposure and limit the spread of disease. To support this community-wide approach, Virginia Tech will implement mitigation strategies supporting public health:

- Access control: Spaces will be cleaned and access restricted when not in use to further limit the potential for contamination and spread.
- Furniture arrangements: Where feasible, furniture will be positioned or removed to encourage behavior consistent with physical-distancing guidance.
- Maintaining 6 feet of separation between occupants: Occupancy will be determined through evaluation of maximum density, respecting the 6-foot rule.
- Access signage: In appropriate spaces (i.e., multiple points of ingress and egress), signs will indicate entryways and exit-ways to minimize face-to-face interaction and support physical distancing when entering and leaving classrooms.
- Space use: To minimize the potential for exposure, contamination, and spread, all community members are encouraged to use virtual meeting options rather than physical gatherings. Virginia Tech provides tools to support virtual collaboration and meeting to all employees and students.
- Virtual access: Meetings, conferences, and any other appropriate gathering types that are conducted in-person should also include a virtual option when feasible to support and encourage participation of vulnerable individuals. The integration of in-person and online learning in each course will be designed by faculty in consultation with department heads, deans and the Provost's Office as appropriate.

4.3.2. *Research Laboratory Settings*

Face coverings (or respiratory protection if needed for a specific hazard) must be worn at all times while in labs/research areas and other spaces to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. However, anyone with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering/mask is not recommended by their medical provider or anyone who has trouble breathing is exempted, but must wear a face shield instead.

Laboratory spaces and equipment will be cleaned at the start and end of each shift, and access will be restricted when not in use.

Laboratory personnel must follow physical-distancing guidelines. Methods that laboratories can use to maintain physical-distancing requirements include:

- Form staffing teams and rotations/shifts for benchwork and use of equipment. Lab groups using shared space(s) and equipment will need to coordinate with each other to ensure that the rotations/shifts do not overlap.

- Assign workstations so that only one bench within a single bay is used (a bay is defined as a work area between two back-to-back lab benches), so that no personnel are working at benches facing directly across from one another.
- Limit the number of personnel present in the lab during each shift. For spaces occupied by multiple groups, principal investigators (PIs) and lab managers will need to coordinate with each other to maintain physical-distancing requirements among all personnel using the space.
- Assigning minimal staff or shifts to handle general laboratory tasks such as making media, setting up cultures, getting equipment up and running, cleaning glassware and autoclaving, and disposing of waste.

4.4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING FOR COMMON SPACE

Physical distancing will be supported in common spaces, including but not limited to informal study areas, residential lounges, the library and student commons, through placement of furniture and removal of seating as appropriate for the space.

4.5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

In conjunction with physical-distancing and personal hygiene strategies, Virginia Tech will employ a consistent, thorough, and deliberate cleaning and disinfection process. The university will manage cleaning of indoor spaces through a combination of frequent and thorough cleaning and access control.

4.5.1. Consistent and Stringent Standards

The university's housekeeping teams follow stringent, documented standard operating guidelines for everyday maintenance and viral disinfection. Across the university, they remain highly proactive in support of illness prevention efforts. These efforts include:

- Stringent daily cleaning.
- Deep cleaning of campus buildings during non-peak times.
- Maintaining an adequate inventory of high-grade cleaning disinfectants and hand sanitizer.
- Enhanced employee training around chemical usage, handwashing, and provision of personal protective equipment.
- Following recommendations provided by the CDC and ISSA (cleaning trade association).

Virginia Tech requires all housekeeping contractors/external vendors to follow these same stringent industry-level guidelines and the Facilities Department remains in constant communication with these vendors.

4.5.2. Cleaning Task Frequencies

The Facilities Department's standard operating procedures and practices include cleaning and disinfecting all common-touch surfaces using EPA-registered chemicals. Surfaces are wiped and left wet for effective dwell time.

- **Restrooms/showers:** All common-touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day using EPA-registered chemicals as a first step in the process.
- **Public spaces:** All common-touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day using EPA registered chemicals.
- **Floors/tiles:** Public areas are spot-mopped daily; fully mopped weekly (with auto-scrub as needed); buffed monthly, and top-scrubbed, stripped, and recoated annually.
- **Floors/carpet:** Public areas are spot-vacuumed daily; fully vacuumed weekly; extracted annually; and interim cleaned as necessary.

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4.5.3. Locations Maintained by Third-party Services

The approach to all campus locations, whether university owned or leased, will be as consistent and scalable as possible. Service frequency and scope in facilities maintained via third-party providers may vary based on location-specific or program-specific service arrangements.

4.5.4. Prioritization of High-touch Items and Spaces

High-touch items, high-volume spaces, and public areas will receive priority. These include, but are not limited to:

- Light switches (if manual)
- Buttons on food/drink vending machines
- Exterior/interior elevator buttons
- Exterior/interior handrails
- Exterior/interior glass windows on doors
- Exterior/interior doorknobs/levers/push handles
- Sink faucets/toilet fixtures/dispensers
- Other frequently used areas

In many high-volume settings, the Facilities Department is using electro-static disinfectant misting machines that increase the number of surfaces cleaned per hour and ensure hard-to-clean surfaces are disinfected. Prioritization of resources and spaces will provide the safest environment possible. As such, care for these spaces (private offices and workstations) will be shared with the user(s). The Facilities Department will continue routine floor care and will respond and address emergency issues as required.

4.5.5. Air Quality

Ongoing preventative maintenance activities including changing air filters and UV lights within HVAC systems will occur regularly.

4.5.6. Alteration of Spaces and Additional Resources

The university has taken actions to physically alter spaces consistent with minimizing exposure potential for community members, including decreasing density and adjusting traffic patterns of interior spaces. The university will also foster physical distancing in such ways as rearranging, removing, or barring access to classroom and common space seating, altering traffic flow in and out of buildings, installing appropriate signage, and installing hand-sanitizer stations at building entryways/exits and elevators.

4.6. CULTURAL CHANGE INITIATIVES

To maximize the effectiveness of the operational plans herein, there is a need to promote adoption of a community culture that understands, appreciates, and complies with public health guidance for mitigating, or slowing, the spread of disease. Cultural adaptation, by definition, challenges the status quo and requires motivation to initiate momentum toward the desired outcome. The Virginia Tech community embodies our university motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). The service ethos has a rich cultural history among existing personnel and programming. This will leverage our cultural strengths to shift students and employees toward a safer, more tolerant, and cohesive community, acting in unity to minimize our collective risks, better protect vulnerable individuals, and demonstrate leadership during challenging times.

5. STUDENT AFFAIRS

5.1. GENERAL

Student Affairs is working to address the varying needs of students during fall 2020. All units in Student Affairs will support and complement the university's three phase Transition Plan as well as Gov. Ralph Northam's Forward Virginia plan. Additionally, all university-sponsored programs, services, and events will be conducted in accordance with CDC guidelines related to Events & Gatherings and Institutes of Higher Education, Commonwealth of Virginia requirements, and Virginia Tech requirements. Community building is essential; Student Affairs is committed to a hybrid model that offers a virtual experience that complements and can substitute, when possible, for in-person experiences. In-person programs, services, and events will be offered only if adequate safety measures are in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

5.2. RESIDENTIAL

In order to provide an on-campus living experience that promotes public health safety, Housing and Residence Life (HRL) will limit the number of students living on campus to no more than two people per room and require all on-campus students to sign a Health and Well-being Commitment. Consistent with previously stated university practices and industry standards, Student Affairs facilities will employ additional cleaning measures (also see 4.5 Cleaning and Disinfecting) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Per normal course, all Virginia Tech residence halls are access controlled with access provided only to residents for security purposes. This access control will also support efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

5.2.1. Housing Contract Updates

Housing and Residence Life has contacted students with completed contracts, as well as incoming first-year students, to notify them of their housing status for fall 2020. If a first-year student does not wish to live on campus, Virginia Tech has waived the first-year residency requirement and students can request a fall contract cancellation form. Returning students who do not wish to live on campus for health reasons can also contact Housing and Residence Life to request a fall contract cancellation.

5.2.2. Health and Well-being Commitments and Precautions

All students wanting to live on campus must review and sign a Health and Well-being Commitment as part of the re-contracting process. The main tenets of the commitment include a 14-day pre-move-in quarantine, practicing physical distancing and personal hygiene, use of face coverings/masks (also see 4.2.3 Face Coverings/Masks), avoiding public spaces, and self-isolating if identified as infected with COVID-19 or at-risk of infection. In addition to the Health and Well-being Commitment, Housing and Residence Life will provide access to hand-sanitizer stations in high-traffic areas of each hall. Housing and Residence Life will have some face coverings/masks available for students who do not have one, as well as isolation and quarantine spaces for students infected with or presumed positive for COVID-19. Health and well-being kits will be distributed. These kits will include two face coverings/masks, a thermometer, hand sanitizer, and tissues.

5.2.3. Move-In

Housing and Residence Life is establishing a carefully organized move-in process spread out over several days to follow public health safety guidelines. Students are limited to two additional people during the move-in process and all will be required to wear a face covering/mask for the duration of the move-in process. Students will be assigned time slots based on room assignment and will have two hours to complete the move-in process.

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Timeslots

All students will be assigned a 2-hour timeslot during which they are able to move into their residence hall. Once the timeslot ends, non-student guests should vacate the premises to allow others to move in safely. Timeslots will be determined by students' room assignment and students will be notified by email over the summer. Additional instructions regarding the flow of move-in will be provided at that time.

Personal Protective Equipment

All students and guests will be required to wear a face covering/mask for the duration of the move-in process. Those accompanying students will be asked to bring their own face covering/mask; however, Housing and Residence Life will have a limited number available for individuals who forget.

Non-Student Guests

Students will be permitted to bring no more than two additional people to assist them with the move-in process. These two individuals should be limited to those needed to assist with the moving of items. Unfortunately, "spectators" such as younger siblings, relatives, or friends are not permitted.

Elevators

Where present, elevators will be limited to one family group at a time. Elevators may only be used by individuals physically moving items and/or individuals with mobility concerns.

5.3. DINING SERVICES

To promote use of dining facilities in the fall in a safe and healthy manner, Dining Services will be limited to residential students and students with roll-over dining funds from the spring 2020. Students will be served in dining facilities, in compliance with state standards relating to such facilities, including physical-distancing standards. For example, dining centers will maintain 6 feet of physical distancing for people in all line queues for ordering and pick-up. In order to accommodate the residential population, off-campus dining plans and credit card sales will not be available for the fall 2020 unless conditions change.

Inside all dining facilities and the workspaces for employees in the "back of house," physical distancing in spaces will be provided based on current guidelines and executive orders. Team member density and workstations will provide for proper spacing with regard to physical distancing. Dining Services has installed in excess of 270 Plexiglas dividers to provide separation between employees and customers. Face coverings/masks and gloves will be required of employees while in the work areas. Handwashing will be required every 60 minutes. If seating is permitted in the facilities, they will align with proper physical-distancing standards between chairs and tables. Peroxide-based disinfectant systems have been installed for employee use, as well as electrostatic sprayers, to assist in cleaning high-touch point areas.

Staff training is a critical part of our reopening procedures. All employees will receive training on COVID-19 safety and sanitation protocols and the personal hygiene guidelines. Employees will be encouraged to self-monitor temperatures and COVID-19 symptoms at home. All employees will be asked the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management's required attestation questions before entering the workplace. Training on proper use and disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE) will occur. Interviewing, onboarding, and training will be completed virtually as much as possible. New-hire orientation and food safety training and assessment will be completed online for all students. In-person trainings should be reduced in size to follow state and university guidelines.

More than 70 touchless payment systems have been installed and are in place throughout the entire Dining Services operation. A biometric reader, the Morpho Wave system, will be available at the entry point of the all-you-care-to-eat facility (Dietrick Dining Hall). This will allow student plan holders to gain access via a touchless entry method. All dining facilities have eliminated cash payment as a form of payment. Guests will no longer be permitted to use their own refillable water bottle or containers at the drink stations. All self-service areas except beverage dispensing have been removed. This includes but is not limited to self-service food stations, salad bars, condiment stations, and the like. Table caddies, tabletop napkin holders, and salt and pepper shakers have also been removed. Additional hand-sanitizer dispensers will be installed throughout the facilities, accompanied by signage to provide guidance and instructions on use. A portfolio of marketing pieces in print, on electronic menu boards, on information boards, and on social media outlets will be used to inform and instruct guests of proper protocol when present in dining facilities.

5.4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Cranwell International Center is responsible for providing immigration and support services to the 4,492 international students (undergraduate, graduate, and post-completion optional practical training employment authorization) at Virginia Tech. The center is also responsible for ensuring institutional compliance with the many federal regulations governing students' enrollment and/or employment. Pursuant to federal regulations, Virginia Tech provided an update to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) regarding "procedural adaptations" for fall 2020 and implications for the Virginia Tech international student population.

The Cranwell International Center will continue to process all immigration casework for international students electronically and paperless via an online enterprise software system, Sunapsis. The center will provide other support services via various modalities, including but not limited to Zoom, email, phone, and other online platforms, in addition to in-person appointments for students in Blacksburg as needed. The Cranwell Center webpage provides the latest information regarding international student requirements, including SEVP and DHS. Any new or returning international students residing on campus will be required to quarantine consistent with state, federal and Virginia Tech guidelines, and to sign the university Health and Well-being Commitment.

6. EVENTS AND GATHERING SPACE

6.1. UNIVERSITY FACILITIES USAGE AND EVENTS

Virginia Tech Policy 5000 governs university facilities usage and events. While Policy 5000 remains in effect, several additional public health criteria must be met for approval of in-person events. Entities within Virginia Tech responsible for managing university facilities usage will evaluate event requests against the COVID-19-related criteria in addition to Policy 5000 requirements. Approval will be granted for event requests complying with Policy 5000, COVID-19 criteria, and availability of space. Virginia Tech has created a risk-informed framework to facilitate a consistent approach to evaluating in-person event requests.

6.1.1.   COVID-19 Event Criteria

Event requests during the COVID-19 pandemic will be assessed in terms of a risk-informed framework. This framework includes a set of criteria for each risk category to guide the event classification. These criteria, subject to change in accordance with public health guidance, will inform the event classification

and subsequent approval process. The Virginia Tech Events Working Group has identified and assigned criteria to the appropriate risk-based categories.

The scheduling office will make the initial determination of the risk category based on the information supplied when requesting the space. For events consistent with minimal- or low-risk categories, the scheduling office will complete the adjudication process. The scheduling office will escalate the adjudication process for moderate- and high-risk categories to the Virginia Tech Events Working Group or the Virginia Tech Incident Management Team.

The Virginia Tech Events Working Group, tasked by the Virginia Tech Incident Management Team, will meet consistently to maintain, adjust, and support the implementation of the risk-informed framework guiding the adjudication for events through 2020.

6.2. LARGE EVENTS

Larger events will be considered under a high-risk classification and must follow the process established in Section 6.1, to include review and adjudication by the Virginia Tech Incident Management Team. Athletic events are subject to NCAA, ACC, and Virginia Tech policies, and will comply with all public health guidance.

7. SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

The coronavirus pandemic and associated impact on community health, economy, and education continues to evolve. Maintaining a high-level of awareness of any new developments and public health guidance is paramount to managing an on-campus educational experience in accordance with the most appropriate mitigation strategies. Virginia Tech will work with internal and external stakeholders, partners, and peers to adapt operations to optimize safety, education, and operations for the university community. To accomplish this goal, it is important that any spread of disease be monitored to the extent possible under prevailing public health guidelines. Virginia Tech will use screening, testing, contact-tracing, wastewater monitoring, and our partnership with the New River Health District to monitor the public health of the Virginia Tech community and surrounding communities.

7.1. SCREENING

Faculty, staff, and students are expected to monitor their health and report any symptoms to Schiffert Health Center (students) or their primary care physician (employees). Employees are expected to report to Human Resources and/or Environmental Health and Safety if their health care provider or the Virginia Department of Health indicates they should be tested for COVID-19. Students should inform the Dean of Students Office if the Schiffert Health Center, their primary care physician, or the Virginia Department of Health indicates they should be tested for COVID-19. Virginia Tech has established a protocol to support off-campus students being tested for, or confirmed to have, COVID-19. Any students who are or have been quarantined, isolated, or confirmed to have COVID-19 should contact the Dean of Students Office as soon as they are able.

Virginia Tech will adapt its public safety mobile device app ("Hokie Ready") for symptom attestation purposes (in addition to its existing public safety and emergency preparedness functions) via a self-reporting, secure, electronic format. Appearing on the "Hokie Ready" mobile app, Hokie Health ✓ is the COVID-19 symptom attestation tool that Virginia Tech employees and students will use prior to reporting for work (employees) or coming onto campus (students) to screen for the existence of any

current COVID-19-related symptoms and any related exposure history if applicable. Hokie Health ✓ provides a rapid assessment and, if necessary, advises the user of any concerning results, along with support and guidance to direct their next steps. A web-based or paper-based screening tool will also be available for community members unable or unwilling to use Hokie Health ✓. Virginia Tech will follow existing guidelines and processes for disciplinary action against students and employees who fail to comply with university or state requirements.

In some on-campus workspaces/facilities, employees may be further screened when arriving to work for each shift. A non-contact temperature scan may be implemented to prevent the risk of disease-spread based on the nature of the work being done. No employee will be allowed in shared workspaces if they are exhibiting any symptoms that the CDC associates with COVID-19.

7.2. TESTING

Several categories have been prioritized for testing as part of the Virginia Tech COVID-19 Testing, Tracing, and Case Management Plan. Students are strongly encouraged to secure a negative polymerase chain reaction COVID-19 test result within five days prior to returning to campus. Those who test positive are required to self-isolate in accordance with their local health department requirements before returning to a Virginia Tech location. Initial testing of residential students upon their return to campus will occur through a testing clinic coordinated by the Schiffert Health Center (SHC) during the move-in days. Residential students are strongly encouraged to participate in testing upon returning to campus. Screening and testing of residential students upon return to campus will provide an initial snapshot of approximately 30 percent of the total student population. This on-campus population is representative of the student body as a whole, including students from areas of high prevalence, within and outside of Virginia. Following this initial testing, ongoing diagnostic testing, screening, and surveillance of students through SHC will continue throughout the fall semester. Testing options are also available for students and employees through their primary care provider, urgent care, select pharmacies, and the local health department. Risk-based exposure for higher-contact areas will be evaluated, and the frequency and number of tests will be a function of the overall testing capacity.

7.3. CONTACT TRACING

The VDH has extensive communicable disease investigation guidelines, including a contact-tracing program that will identify the highest-risk contacts of cases in the overall community. Virginia Tech is in a unique position to partner with the VDH in this effort and provide data in support of contact-tracing efforts through methods already practiced by the Virginia Tech Case Management Team, which will act as a liaison to gather additional information and provide assistance, as requested by the NRHD.

7.4. ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Virginia Tech has set aside residential space for purposes of isolating or quarantining residential students in support of public health containment. Residential students will be placed in quarantine when being evaluated for COVID-19 by a health care professional and directed by that professional to quarantine. Residential students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be placed in isolation in accordance with the Student Affairs isolation protocol and public health guidance.

During the isolation period, these individuals are to avoid all unnecessary contact with others. The isolation period for symptomatic individuals or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be determined on a case-by-case basis by medical professionals. Isolated individuals will remain in a single room with a private bathroom for the duration of the isolation period. Necessary items, such as food, hygiene needs, and household items, will be brought to the isolation space in order to mitigate the spread of disease. Once cleared by medical professionals, students will return to their regularly assigned rooms. They will be directed to provide documentation of clearance by their medical provider to indicate that they have left the isolation space. Once cleared, students will be able to resume attending in-person classes, programs, and events. Rooms will be left vacant for a minimum of 72 hours to allow virus decay before cleaning begins. Should circumstances require an expedited timeline, facilities staff will evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

7.5. CASE MANAGEMENT

Virginia Tech has established a Case Management Team and a case management system to track, provide service to, and support affected community members. The case management system provides a single point of information shared across key university points of contact to minimize the burden on those seeking support from the university across multiple areas. This access-controlled system will support community members, inform monitoring, and eliminate duplication of efforts for those in isolation or quarantine, provided they seek support from the university.

8. ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT

8.1. COVID-19 AND THE ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides protection from discrimination for individuals on the basis of disability. During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals with disabilities have the same civil rights protection to access employment in the public and private sectors, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunications services. Virginia Tech is, and will be, compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act in any application of the law to COVID-19 challenges. Virginia Tech's Office of Equity and Accessibility and the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities will work with community members requesting accommodations to support any additional needs relative to the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.2. WHAT WE ARE DOING:

The Office of Equity and Accessibility's ADA and Accessibility Services have streamlined processes for employees with disabilities requesting accommodation in the workplace. The CDC has identified high-risk populations; however, it is important to note that only some individuals within the high-risk populations can utilize protections under ADA to obtain a workplace accommodation. Listed below are examples of those populations:

- Asthma
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Hemoglobin disorders
- Immunocompromised
- Liver disease
- Serious heart conditions

8.3. TELEWORK/REMOTE WORK

Virginia Tech supports the use of appropriate flexible and alternative work options for employees. This includes leveraging telework/remote work options as employees return to the workplace and continue to address work and life issues throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.4. LEAVE

Virginia Tech offers a variety of leave benefits to allow time off from work for employees to address various needs. In addition, the following leave programs are available as a result of the impact of COVID-19:

- Public Health and Emergency Leave (PHEL) is a benefit activated by the Commonwealth of Virginia for state employees as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and when remote work options are not available. This benefit is available to Virginia Tech full- and part-time faculty and staff and many wage employees who are impacted by the virus.

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) is an act of Congress drafted to respond to the economic impacts of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The legislation has two components that provide the following leave benefits: Federal Emergency Sick Leave (FESL/FMES) and Expanded Federal Family and Medical Leave (FFML). FFCRA is available to Virginia Tech full- and part-time faculty and staff and many wage employees who are impacted by the virus. FFCRA does allow exclusions for certain groups of employees from eligibility, such as healthcare providers and emergency responders. FFCRA leave provisions are effective Apr. 1, 2020, and end Dec. 31, 2020.

8.5. POST-ILLNESS

Employees and students will be allowed to return to their normal schedules and activities on campus after they have been cleared by their primary care physician, Schiffert Health Center, and/or New River Health District. Employees will need to provide documentation stating clearance to Human Resources. Undergraduate students will need to provide documentation to the Dean of Students office, and graduate students will need to provide documentation to the Graduate School.

9. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

9.1. HOKIE WELLNESS

Disease outbreaks such as the current coronavirus pandemic can aggravate stress and levels of fear and anxiety. Any member of the community experiencing a crisis or medical emergency is encouraged to dial 911 immediately. Employees are provided the following university, state, and other resources available to provide emotional support during this difficult time:
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to offer emotional support to employees.
  - Anthem at 855-223-9277
  - Aetna at 888-238-6232
  - Kaiser Permanente at 866-517-7042
  - Optima Health Vantage HMO at 866-846-2682
- Hokie Wellness for employees: hokiewellness@vt.edu, 540-231-8878.
- Employee Wellness at Home site for additional information and resources.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created this resource related to mental health and coping during COVID-19.

In addition, Cook Counseling Center provides mental and emotional well-being resources for students. **Anyone concerned about a Virginia Tech student being (or becoming) suicidal** is instructed to call Cook Counseling Center at 540-231-6557 or one of these other resources. The Cook Counseling Center number can be used during regular office hours or after-hours to speak with a counselor.

9.2. SCHIFFERT HEALTH CENTER

9.2.1.   Health Care Providers
All health care providers within Schiffert are required to wear masks and to maintain physical distancing whenever possible. All providers are required to wash their hands prior to and after all interactions with patients. In addition, Schiffert will maintain a supply of medical-grade PPE for required use. Providers performing aerosol-generating procedures will be in full PPE and utilize the negative pressure room. Schiffert staff members' N95 respirators that are not damaged or soiled will be decontaminated at the sterilization site on campus that is operated by Battelle, in partnership with FEMA and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Schiffert will coordinate submission of N95 respirators for decontamination with Environmental Health and Safety. Plexiglas barriers are installed in areas where there are face-to-face interactions with patients. Those staff who are high-risk are limited to seeing non-sick patients.

9.2.2.   Patients
All patients entering the health center are required to wear a face covering/mask. A face covering/mask will be provided if the patient does not have one, and face coverings/masks are available for purchase in the health center pharmacy. Public health announcements regarding COVID-19 are posted prominently in the front foyer, on television screens, and throughout the health center facility. Handwashing reminders are also posted throughout the health center. Hand-sanitizer dispensers are located throughout the health center, in every exam room, and in all provider offices. Visitors coming with patients will not be permitted to be present in the exam room or clinic area; they will be required to wait outside.

9.2.3.   Waiting Areas
There are separate waiting areas for sick and well patients, seating will be arranged to maximize distancing, and pagers will be used for patients waiting to pick up prescriptions.

9.2.4.   Exam Rooms
Exams rooms are separated for sick and well patients, and there are policies in place for the cleaning of exam rooms between patients and at the end of day; EPA-registered disinfectants are utilized in addition to an electrostatic sprayer.

9.2.5.   Patient Care Considerations
- Students are encouraged to call the health center if they are ill.
- Mobile check-in will be available.
- All patients will have their temperature taken.

9.2.6.   General Operations
Schiffert Health Center will operate normal hours (Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.), all staff will be on site, and all services

will be available. Any changes or updates to operations will be communicated using, at minimum, the Schiffert Health Center and Virginia Tech websites.

9.2.7. Active COVID/Presumptive COVID Actions for Space, Notification, Coverage

Once notification of a symptomatic or positive COVID-19 case for an on-campus student has been received, Housing and Residence Life will make contact with the student and provide the student of concern with instructions on how to retrieve items needed for isolation from their regularly assigned space. The student's access to their current space will be turned off three hours after the student receives instructions. As part of these instructions, Housing and Residence Life will relay that linens and basic necessities (i.e., plates, silverware, cleaning supplies, paper products, etc.) will be provided in the isolation space. Students will be required to bring clothing, medication, toiletries, hair dryers, and other needed personal items to the isolation space with them. Student Affairs' facilities staff will perform enhanced cleaning on all common pathways, common spaces, and bathrooms of the residence hall where the student resided pre-isolation.

Food

Students will place their orders using the GrubHub app, and staff will deliver meals to student rooms. Staff will knock, place meals outside students' doors, and walk away. There will be no contact with the students in isolation. Staff will wear appropriate PPE and be trained on appropriate cleaning protocols following delivery. Meal plans will be used for payment.

Trash Removal

Trash bags are provided to students in the emergency kit in their room. Students should place trash bags outside their doors for removal by 8 a.m. on Monday and Friday mornings. Student Affairs' facilities staff will collect and dispose of the bags during regular cleaning.

Laundry

Residents are provided a small bottle of laundry detergent in their emergency go-kit. To the extent possible, we encourage residents to use this detergent to wash necessary items in their sinks and air-dry them during the isolation period. If it is necessary for laundry to be removed from the isolation space to be washed, residents should reach out to Housing and Residence Life via email to coordinate.

Continued Student Contact

Housing and Residence Life will work with the Dean of Students Office to check in with the student regularly for the duration of the isolation period. Schiffert Health Center will call patients in isolation daily and patients in quarantine every other day to evaluate their health and symptoms.

9.3. COOK COUNSELING

The Cook Counseling Center will be operational during the fall semester, to include crisis on-call services, individual counseling, group counseling, psychiatry services, and resource workshops. All counseling offerings related to individual counseling, group counseling, and resource workshops will continue as tele-therapy during the fall semester. All crisis services will be in-person.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

10.1. RETURN TO CAMPUS

University Relations is on point for communications and has a coordinated and aligned effort that includes university leadership and all administrative areas, colleges, institutes, centers, locations, and units. All central platforms and tools are being leveraged to communicate all information related to the pandemic and the fall.

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University Relations is informing and educating the campus and community on updates and on policies, procedures, public health guidelines, and wellness for the return to campus instruction and operations for fall 2020. This work is coordinated through the IMT and a centralized communications team. Strategic communications are regularly reviewed by the President's Cabinet.

All official communications are published to the vt.edu/ready website, which launched with the first set of fall plans and resources on June 8. An earlier iteration of this website that focused on the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was launched in mid-March.

Information for different audience segments – employees, faculty, students, researchers — was created and is regularly updated as details emerge. Frequently asked questions provide helpful, quickly accessible, predetermined responses to questions from employees, students, parents, and the community. Videos provide education on the use of face coverings and other public health guidance. A page created on the Ready site features helpful resources. Print-on-demand resources include signage for face coverings, locations to wash hands, separate entrances and exits, and guidance for physical distancing. Updates and new materials will be added.

Every weekday morning, a daily email, which includes campus updates for fall as they are announced, is distributed to all faculty and staff members (roughly 11,500 recipients). Additionally, a public subscriber base of 13,000 readers also receives the daily email.

In addition to the regular communications to students from Student Affairs, University Relations also sends an email regularly to inform students and parents of updates and information.

All official social media accounts, central and campus-wide, are leveraged to communicate updates and public health guidance.

Senior leadership and president-level communications are regularly used for updates and to reinforce policies and distributed by email.

A series of town halls, expert panels, and presentations are regularly scheduled to help inform the community. These communications are offered virtually but may start to be offered with an in-person option as well, as CDC and VDH guidelines permit. The video recordings of the events are available on the vt.edu/ready website.

University relations maintains a close working relationship with the Town of Blacksburg to ensure consistent communication and messaging.

Goal/Purpose/Objective of Communications

1.   Inform campus
Provide transparency and clarity for the campus and community regarding fall plans.

2.   Educate on public health, policy, and operational changes

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Communicate key decisions and changes with a coordinated effort on outreach and education.

Communications stakeholders
- Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
- Blacksburg and the New River Valley
- Governor's office
- VDH and Joint Command Center
- University leadership

Coordinated messages at campus locations

Blacksburg
- Campus offices, including all academic and administrative units
- Communications in conjunction with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
- Research institutes

Roanoke
- Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
- Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC
- Roanoke Higher Education Center
- Community and media members

Greater Washington, D.C., metro area
- Falls Church
- Arlington
- Alexandria
- Leesburg

Agricultural Research and Extension Centers
- Alson H. Smith Jr. (Winchester)
- Eastern Shore
- Eastern Virginia
- Hampton Roads
- Middleburg
- Reynolds Homestead
- Shenandoah Valley
- Southern Piedmont
- Southwest Virginia
- Tidewater
- Virginia Seafood (Hampton)

Other locations
- University centers and research locations in Abington, Danville, Roanoke, Richmond, and Hampton Roads

10.2. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Virginia Tech's Crisis Communication Plan will serve as the primary plan to manage communications in response to changes in the pandemic status that are significant enough to warrant modifications to planned operations. Management of any crisis or emergency event is a complicated and multi-faceted task. Virginia Tech recognizes many different audiences must be reached with information specific to their interests and needs. In an emergency or other crisis, effective and timely communication helps to protect life, public safety, and property, and upholds the long-term integrity of Virginia Tech.

In addition to the Virginia Tech Crisis Communications Plan, University Relations uses the Crisis and Emergency Management Plan to support the university's overall response to a campus emergency, specifically, the Emergency Support Function #14: Media Relations and Community Outreach and Annex A: Emergency Notification System Protocols. The Senior Associate Vice President for University Relations, with the support of the Assistant Vice President for University Relations and other communicators as needed, work to provide an orderly and accurate flow of information.

APPENDIX A – CONTINGENCY PLANNING

1. INTRODUCTION

Virginia Tech's COVID-19 fall 2020 contingency planning provides a framework to guide actions intended to protect the health of the Virginia Tech community if a resurgence of COVID-19 occurs. Included in this plan are: (a) the administrative entities responsible for assessment of risk and rendering of decisions; (b) the metrics used to assess risk and thresholds at which comprehensive review will occur; and (c) the actions to be considered in accordance with the level of risk.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a dynamic challenge with many uncertainties. Flexible and responsive management is needed to deliver the university's academic mission while mitigating health safety risk – an approach that requires continuous awareness and analysis of new information. Please note that the contents of this plan are based on currently available information and guidance, and that it will be informed and updated if necessary as new information and guidance become available. Ultimately, Virginia Tech will rely on the situational intelligence of personnel responsible for implementing the plan, subject to direction received from federal and state governments and the VDH.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

2.1. AUTHORITY

All actions taken to mitigate health safety risk posed by COVID-19 will be subject to federal and state direction. Currently, Virginia Tech operations are guided by Virginia Tech Presidential Policy Memorandum 309, "Process for Reducing On-Site Staff in Response to COVID-19 Emergency," which classifies three emergency condition levels (reduced operations, essential operations, and closure), and a plan for "Transition from Essential-Only Operations to Modified Operations" (revised June 4, 2020). Virginia Tech's current intent is to begin the 2020 fall semester in modified operations. The memorandum and transition plan provide a comprehensive framework and process to guide decisions and actions necessary to mitigate health risk should resurgence of COVID-19 occur.

Decision-making responsibility ultimately rests with the President of Virginia Tech. Such decisions are considered in light of recommendations of the President's Cabinet and informed by Virginia Tech Emergency Management.

3. RISK ASSESSMEMENT

3.1. SITUATION AWARENESS AND MONITORING OF HEALTH SAFETY METRICS

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on community health, the economy, and education continues to evolve. Maintaining a high level of awareness is paramount to successful management of an on-campus educational experience while also implementing the most appropriate health safety risk mitigation strategies. Virginia Tech will work with internal and external stakeholders, partners, and peers to adapt operations to optimize safety, education, and operations for the university community.

The success of these efforts will be highly dependent on surveillance and monitoring spread of the virus. In particular, the following health safety metrics will be tracked:
- Data compiled by Virginia Tech described in Section 7 above.

- Regional prevalence of serious disease requiring hospitalization will be assessed in collaboration with established health care partners Lewis Gale Montgomery Regional Hospital and Carillion Clinic New River Valley Hospital. In collaboration with the New River Valley Public Health Task Force, Virginia Tech will be informed of available hospital beds, ICU beds, and ventilators at each of these local hospitals.
- The availability of faculty, staff, and graduate students to deliver educational, research, and outreach missions, including in-person learning.
- The availability of faculty and staff to maintain necessary administrative and service functions.
- Available isolation and quarantine space for on-campus students.
- Updated COVID-19 disease modeling data and projections.

These data will be considered in context and with input from internal and external partners to form frequent assessments of the COVID-19 threat to the Virginia Tech community. University leadership and the Incident Management Team will use these data and subject-matter expertise in combination with health safety metrics and associated thresholds to drive operational actions in support of public health.

4. OPERATIONAL RESPONSES

Based on current public health assessments and projections, Virginia Tech will begin the fall 2020 semester in modified operations. Use of health safety metrics and associated thresholds provides an objective approach whereby the university will consider all available information in determining the best course of action necessary to improve public health. Health safety thresholds are meant to induce operational action for the benefit of the community, rather than force decisions without proper input and consideration of all known variables.

4.1. REDUCED OPERATIONS

This operational status will be considered when the situation-awareness information, surveillance and monitoring data, and subject-matter experts indicate this operational shift will appropriately address existing public health concerns. These public health concerns will be the impetus for university leadership to review and act on the available information/data provided (See Appendix A 5. Escalation Process).

Specific health safety thresholds that will cause consideration of reduced operations include:
- 50 percent or less available isolation capacity.
- 20 percent or less available quarantine capacity.
    - Consideration will be given for continued modified operations if infection rate is decreasing or stable when thresholds are met.
- Reduction in workforce sufficient to cause operational disruptions for one or more departments, offices, or units.
    - Reduction in workforce refers to efficacy, and not physical location. Remote work does not constitute a concern, unless and until it adversely affects the ability to accomplish the university's mission.
- Infection rate trends are increasing.
- Hospital metrics and public health partners report concerns regarding bed availability, ICU availability, and/or ventilator availability.

4.2. ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS

This operational status will be considered for several reasons, all of which are consistent with Virginia Tech's mission, principles, and public health guidance:

- Actions taken for reduced operations are insufficient or ineffective, according to data and subject-matter experts.
- One or more significant changes to the external operating environment (i.e., state and federal metrics indicate an impending threat to the Virginia Tech community inconsistent with current local metrics).
- State and federal requirements.

5. ESCALATION PROCESS

5.1. ALERT

The Virginia Tech Incident Management Team (VT IMT) monitors the international, national, state and local impacts of COVID-19, and works with the Virginia Department of Health and the New River Health District to maintain constant awareness and understanding of the public health status of the Virginia Tech and surrounding communities. If the data meet or exceeds the threshold for a health safety metric, the VT IMT will alert university leadership. University leadership will evaluate the available information and provide strategic policy decisions to the VT IMT with respect to changes, if warranted, in the university operational status. The IMT will coordinate the implementation of these policy decision across the Virginia Tech enterprise.

5.2. NOTIFICATION

The VT IMT will be responsible for coordinating notification of operational status. University Relations, in accordance with standard operating procedures and the Virginia Tech Crisis Communications Plan, will lead the effort to inform the community of any changes to the operational status. University Relations will maintain continuous communications with the community to facilitate broad understanding and adoption of the changes.

6. CHANGES TO OPERATIONS

6.1. APPROACH

In accordance with Presidential Policy Memorandum 309, Virginia Tech will transition from modified operational status to reduced or essential operational status as determined based on health safety metrics, subject-matter expertise, and public health guidance under the authority of the President of the university.

6.1.1. Reduced Operations

The university will further limit the potential for in-person interaction; increase awareness, outreach, and education; implement broad-scale telework where feasible, and limit hours of operation and implement other exposure-control mechanisms. Moreover, the university will implement movement restrictions for students and employees across campus. Where prudent, additional testing and surveillance efforts will be implemented. In reduced operations, the university will allow students to leave on-campus housing and return home, increase distancing restrictions in residence halls, supply additional cleaning supplies to bathrooms, and increase outreach and education in residence halls to alert students to changing conditions. Dining facilities will limit hours, transition away from dining in, and increase mobile order pick-up options to limit in-person interaction.

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6.1.2.   Essential Operations

In addition to the actions taken for reduced operations, Virginia Tech will eliminate all non-essential activities or processes, implement telework for all non-essential employees, cease all in-person instruction, and limit research to essential research only with restrictions. The university may de-populate residence halls and enact a process for allowing exemptions when a student demonstrates a significant need to stay on campus, along with increasing restrictions within residence halls. Dining facilities will be limited to on-campus residents with limited hours of operations and will transition to mobile-order and delivery options for the remaining on-campus residents. Dining services, mail services, certain service centers, and similar essential functions will restrict access and change operations consistent with their spring 2020 operational changes. Further, Virginia Tech departments, service centers, units, and offices will implement staffing strategies to minimize exposure potential.

6.1.3.   Closure

If conditions pose a severe risk to health and safety or present difficult logistical challenges that will severely impede the efficient and effective function of operations, Virginia Tech will consider closure. On-site facilities may be closed, and essential services may be reduced further across the university or at selected sites as necessary. Residence halls will only house students with a demonstrated significant need to stay on campus. Dining facilities will be limited to on-campus residents with limited hours of operations and will transition to delivery-only options to the remaining on-campus residents.