

### **Sarah Lawrence College Plan for Reopening and Operating for Fall Semester, 2020**

Sarah Lawrence College, in consultation with local and state health officials, health experts within its community, and alongside the College's faculty, staff, and administration, have developed a plan for the Fall 2020 semester that prioritizes community health and safety and simultaneously empowers students to advance and receive the exceptional education for which the College is known.

Sarah Lawrence's [plans for the fall semester](#) meet or exceed all requirements in [New York's guidance for higher education](#), and includes:

- A hybrid form of education, with most classes convening online, but permitting smaller group work and meetings between students and faculty in person on campus when/if possible;
- All instruction moving to online-only after Thanksgiving and students who leave for Thanksgiving remaining away from campus for the remainder of the semester;
- A significantly reduced on-campus population and density;
- Mandatory wearing of face masks/coverings in public spaces, physical distancing, daily symptom checking, and robust hygiene and cleaning practices;
- Reimagining campus spaces and operations to support the above

### **How this plan was developed**

As the New York region grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, Sarah Lawrence College President Cristle Collins Judd established two unique working groups -- the **Post Pandemic Planning Task Force (PPPTF)** and **SLC Forward - Campus Restoration Team** – which brought staff, faculty, and the administration together to begin planning for the fall as well as for the College's long-term future. While the PPPTF focused on the College's budget, pedagogy, and how Sarah Lawrence could continue to build on its unique strengths and emerge from the pandemic an even stronger institution, the SLC Forward group focused on the question of whether a return to in-person and on-campus operations could be done safely for the fall semester, and, if so, how? These groups received input from the broader community and their decision-making process was regularly shared with the faculty and staff through written communication as well as in regular staff and faculty meetings.

There are three (3) sections to this document:

1. Reopening the Sarah Lawrence College campus
2. Monitoring community health
3. Monitoring the state of the pandemic and campus operations

## **Reopening the Sarah Lawrence College Campus**

As part of the SLC Forward working group's exploration regarding the efficacy of return-to-campus operations within the New York State higher education guidelines, the group explored all facets of campus life, from instruction and general operations to dining facilities, community health expectations, and residence halls. The team determined that yes, on-campus operations could resume for Fall 2020, given the state of the pandemic in New York and the northeast in early summer, but that such a return would require rethinking of daily operations and campus usage to promote safety and mitigate the risk for potential viral spread, and constant vigilance to adjust to the changing nature of the virus.

### **Campus Population**

- Sarah Lawrence students **are not required to be on campus** this fall and can advance their education entirely online should they choose to do so.
- Residence halls will operate at roughly 45% of typical capacity, with all students living in single-occupancy bedrooms (please note that many of SLC's residence halls are apartment-style, and so students may share communal space, but will have their own bedroom)
  - First year students, new transfer students, international students, as well as students with a demonstrable hardship that would make learning away from campus impossible received housing priority for the fall semester
  - An overflow lottery for other students who wished to live on campus was held to fill the remaining spaces
  - A decision regarding spring semester on-campus housing will be made during the fall
  - Students who did not receive housing are permitted to commute to campus to meet with faculty and use college facilities, though such use may require reservations or be limited at times
- Staff who are able to work remotely will continue to do so and on-campus staff schedules will be adjusted to ensure spacing in environments where on-campus staff are necessary
- The majority of faculty will convene classes online and may do so from their on-campus offices or from a remote location
  - Faculty may hold smaller class meetings in-person and on-campus, and space will be made available for them to hold such meetings under social distancing precautions - these convenings would complement any online learning already planned
  - The College has surveyed every room and space on campus and has created an inventory of occupancy capacities that reflect social distancing

- this will be used to ensure appropriate space is used for on-campus convenings

### **Staff and Faculty Returning to Campus**

- In addition to essential staff, who have been on campus during the entirety of the pandemic, staff who have been working away from campus will gradually return to campus during the month of August - this group of staff is predominately student-facing staff as well as members of campus operations and facilities
- Faculty will also be able to return to campus, per NY State guidance, as part of the Mid-Hudson region's Phase IV reopening
- Staff and faculty who have a health consideration related to COVID-19 and/or who live with someone who has a health consideration can request an accommodation through the College's Human Resources department
  - Faculty who are teaching only online during the fall semester will not be required to request such an accommodation
- Staff and faculty who return to work on campus this fall will be required to complete a mandatory training on COVID-19 prevention and transmission

### **Students Returning to Campus**

- Beginning in late August, Resident Advisors (RAs) and other students who are part of residence life staff and operations will return to campus
- Residential students (those living in on-campus residence halls) will move in during a three-day period from September 4 through September 6
  - Students arriving from states and countries for which [NY requires a 14-day quarantine](#) will do so ahead of arrival and off campus
  - Upon arrival, every student will receive a COVID-19 test for screening purposes to establish a baseline of community health
  - Students will be allowed only one guest to help move in
- The academic year will begin on September 7 and all instruction will shift to entirely online following Thanksgiving
- Some students may choose to live near campus and commute to campus - they will have access to college facilities, in accordance with reduced density limits in all facilities, but will not have access to residence halls
- Students who live on campus this fall will be required to complete a mandatory training on COVID-19 prevention and transmission

### **Instruction and Class Meetings**

- **No student will be required to come to campus** during the semester - each student will have the choice to participate in an entirely online format of learning

- Sarah Lawrence's pedagogy, which focuses on close engagement between students and faculty, will continue to be the foundation of learning this fall
- Nearly all class meetings, when meeting as a full group, will take place in an online medium with one main exception:
  - First-Year Studies courses, and other first-year programming, will strive to meet in person when/if possible; such in-person interactions will also have an online option for students not on campus (no student is required to live on campus or in proximity of campus)
  - These classes and meetings will be held in rooms that allow for social distancing and all participants will wear face masks/coverings
    - Rooms that may typically hold much larger groups will be used in order to accommodate necessary spacing, including auditoriums, event spaces, and theaters
- Students and faculty **may complement online learning with in-person and on-campus meetings of smaller groups** and individual 1:1 meetings with students and faculty, such as breakout groups from larger lectures or meetings to advance individual study and research. These will take place in rooms that allow for social distancing and all participants will wear face masks/coverings

### Residence Halls

- As previously stated, residence halls will have roughly 45% of their typical capacity and all **residents will have their own bedroom**, sharing common space like a bathroom or living room within an apartment/suite-style dorm
- Careful planning has gone into determining residence hall capacities, considering **bathroom capacities as well as typical traffic**, assuring spaces will not experience high volumes of people moving through them and ample space will be available
- The College will perform **enhanced cleaning** of public spaces in residence halls, but will not enter students' rooms/apartments for cleaning
  - Students will be provided cleaning materials to use in their own rooms and Resident Advisors will conduct regular hygiene checks in rooms
- Students will not have access to residence halls they do not reside in
  - Should the health of the community remain in good standing, students may be welcome to have **visitors from their residence hall** inside their room during later phases of reopening
    - Policies will be reassessed every 14 days
  - Face masks/coverings must be worn when residential students are inside another student's dorm room/apartment

## **Campus Life and Co-curricular Activities**

Similar to New York's thoughtful and measured phased approach to reopening, Sarah Lawrence will pursue a similar framework with regards to campus life and student events. The fall semester will commence in a more restrictive phase and the College will closely monitor community health (as well as the conditions in Westchester County and the New York City metro region) and reassess in two week increments

- When students arrive on campus in early September, **restrictions on gatherings** will be in place, with the potential to allow small gatherings in succeeding phases
  - At first, students will socialize mostly with their suitemates and/or other students on the same floor of their residence halls
  - Should community health and compliance with safety measures remain robust, Residence Life staff will consider expanding event participation, though social distancing and facemasks will always be required
    - Outdoor spaces will be used whenever possible
- All campus spaces, including dining halls, the library, and the Barbara Walters Campus Center, will have **capacity limitations**
  - Students may need to make a reservation for common spaces
  - Students *will* need to make reservations for facilities like music recording studios and computer labs, where space is defined, severely limited, and cleaning between uses necessary
- **Campus life events** will take place both in person and online during the fall semester
  - Almost all on-campus events will require an RSVP to ensure adequate spacing and to enforce room capacities
  - The College will utilize outdoor space whenever possible to facilitate in-person events
- **Dining halls** will be open but seating during the beginning of the semester will be outdoors
  - Limited indoor seating may be made available later in the semester, pending the state of the pandemic
  - Spacing while eating will be necessary as students cannot eat with face masks on. To limit close contacts, students will be encouraged to eat with those they live with
- There will be **no NCAA Division III athletic competition** during the fall athletic season and a decision regarding winter and spring competition will be made during the fall semester
  - Athletes may have the opportunity to train with their teams, but any such activity will require distancing and be unique to an individual sport

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Students, Faculty, and Staff on Campus**

- Every person who is on campus this fall semester **must wear a face mask/covering** when in any public space, regardless of whether the space is inside or outside and regardless of whether social distancing is possible
  - A staff or faculty member who has their own office does not need to wear a mask when working alone in their office
  - Students do not need to wear masks when inside their dorm room, either alone or when only in the company of those they share an apartment/suite with
  - Masks may be removed when eating in a public space like outdoor seating adjacent to a dining hall
- **Sarah Lawrence will provide** an appropriate cloth (reusable and washable) face mask for all on-campus students, faculty, and staff
- Some members of campus, like healthcare providers in the College's Health and Wellness Center and members of Campus Safety will need **additional PPE**, like face shields, gloves, and gowns, to wear in certain circumstances
  - Sarah Lawrence is working with appropriate partners to ensure adequate availability of medical-level PPE throughout the duration of the pandemic

### **Enhanced Cleaning**

As conveyed in an earlier part of this document, the College **will conduct extra cleaning** and empower the community to practice robust personal and communal hygiene

- Common and public spaces like dining halls, library, restrooms, and the Campus Center will be disinfected regularly and as needed
- Public restrooms within residence halls will also be cleaned and disinfected by the College regularly
- Cleaning supplies will be provided for every dorm room/suite for students to perform regular cleanings and Resident Advisors will conduct hygiene checks throughout the semester as well as develop community activities to support hygiene, like free laundry days
- Cleaning supplies will also be available in all classroom spaces to wipe down spaces before and after use
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout campus, especially at building entrances/exits
- The College is prepared to close portions of campus and perform emergency cleanings, should that be necessary

## **Monitoring Community Health**

The health and safety of the Sarah Lawrence community is the College's utmost priority. SLC has carefully considered and planned to create a healthy and safe environment that reflects the risks of COVID-19, taking appropriate precautions to mitigate and address possible spread of the virus.

### **Testing, Screening, and Tracing**

- All students who will live on campus or intend to commute to campus have been **instructed to take a COVID-19 PCR test in the 14-days prior to arrival on campus**
  - Students with a positive test would need to complete isolation procedures before arriving on campus
- **Upon arrival** on campus, residential and commuter students will **receive a COVID-19 PCR** test to complement their pre-arrival testing. This screening test, fully funded by the College, will be conducted on campus and used to establish a baseline for the student community
  - This is a screening test, so students will not enter quarantine until results are available, but are asked to be mindful and limit their close contacts until results come back
  - Results from this screening will inform decisions regarding testing during the semester
  - **Commuter students** will also receive a PCR test on campus at the beginning of the semester
- Sarah Lawrence's Health and Wellness Center will provide care for all students throughout the semester and has **established a partnership with a laboratory** in New York to process PCR COVID-19 tests collected on campus
- All members of the Sarah Lawrence community will **conduct a daily COVID-19 symptom check and screening** prior to arriving on campus and/or beginning their days on campus
  - Those who do not pass the daily symptom screening will remain off campus or in their dorm room and seek appropriate medical guidance
- **Contact tracing** for the Sarah Lawrence community will be done in partnership with the Westchester County Department of Health and in collaboration with any neighboring authorities that may be involved

### **Quarantine and Isolation on Campus**

The College has identified **several residence halls that will be used solely for quarantine and isolation housing**, should it be necessary to separate individual residential students. The College's quarantine/isolation capacity reflects the American

College Health Association's recommendation that quarantine/isolation space be 10% of a college's on-campus student population (for example, 500 students would result in 50 rooms/bathrooms available for quarantine/isolation). Residential students who test positive will be placed in isolation and those who are identified as in close contact (within six feet for 10 minutes or more) of someone who is symptomatic and/or has tested positive, will enter quarantine. Residential students will receive care through the SLC Health and Wellness Center and food will be delivered to them. CDC and New York State quarantine and isolation guidelines will be followed and the College has established a system not only for moving students into quarantine/isolation housing, but also a priority system for which rooms are filled and in which order.

**Commuter students as well as staff and faculty**, as they do not reside on campus, will be responsible for their own accommodations regarding quarantine/isolation.

### **Communications**

In compliance with FERPA and HIPAA policies, the College will communicate appropriate and relevant information regarding the state of the virus in the College's geographic region as well as within the campus community. These updates will enable campus and community members to remain informed and guide them in decision making as it relates to their health.

In addition to the above policies regarding communication of COVID-19 cases on campus, the College will execute a full **community engagement communications initiative** to ensure all students, faculty, and staff are aware of the College's COVID-19 related policies and procedures and to empower the community to make safe decisions. This will include students, faculty, and staff and will utilize social media, in-person and online events, campus signage, and residence life programming to foster a sense of togetherness and encourage social distancing, wearing a face mask, robust personal hygiene, and understanding that an individual's actions can and will affect other people.

### **Monitoring the State of the Pandemic and Campus Operations**

While there is a far better understanding of COVID-19 today than when it first spread in New York, Sarah Lawrence is also keenly aware it may spread quickly despite containment efforts put in place by states, counties, municipalities, and organizations. Sarah Lawrence will actively monitor its on-campus community, the College's broader community of commuter students, faculty, and staff, and will pay close attention to COVID-19 developments in the northeast and more locally in Westchester County, New York's Mid-Hudson region, and the New York City metro area.



The College will adapt depending on this fluid situation and advise the community regarding changes in protocol, policies, and operations - recognizing that modes of transportation and travel corridors around the world may be affected by the pandemic's movement. The College takes very seriously its role as a residential institution, and as best as it is able, will accommodate students who have no safe place to go should a change in operation status become necessary.

As mentioned in earlier portions of this document, Sarah Lawrence will have a phased reopening of campus, beginning with faculty and staff, followed by students who are part of the Residence Life staff (Resident Advisors, for example), and then residential students will begin to arrive on Friday, September 4, with all students moved in over that weekend and into the following week.

Campus operations will be adjusted in two-week increments, depending on capacity of isolation/quarantine rooms, rate of spread of the virus on campus, general health of the community, and the prevalence of the virus in the Westchester County, the New York City metro area, and the Mid-Hudson region.

The College will always follow guidance from state and local authorities and will use Governor Cuomo's guidelines for K-12 school operations as a baseline for evaluating community spread.

In the same way that low viral prevalence on campus and in the broader Westchester community would lead to more relaxed campus life policies (such as limited indoor seating in dining areas and allowing students of the same residence hall into each others' rooms), the College will implement more stringent policies should they be necessary to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. These restrictions, which are part of the College's phased re-opening and phased pause plan, may include:

- Moving dining to to-go/pickup only
- Moving all in-person on-campus meetings to tele/video-conference
- Moving all academic meetings and instruction to online
- Closing portions of campus for an undetermined period of time
- Closing portions of buildings for an undetermined period of time
- Limiting on-campus events to outdoors only
- Limiting campus life events to online only
- Limiting residential student engagement
- Restricting all visitors from off-campus
- Restricting residential students from leaving campus
- Further reducing occupancy capacity of buildings
- Requiring all students who are able to leave campus at Thanksgiving to do so

- Further limiting staff and faculty who are on campus
- Changing use patterns in buildings to ensure more robust distancing
- Closing campus to all who do not reside on campus and non-essential staff

Should there be **uncontrolled and widespread community transmission** of the virus on campus and/or in the College's geographic area during the fall semester that makes it unsafe for residential students to live on campus, no matter how insulated the on-campus community is, the College will communicate the decision to proceed with students moving out of residence halls and move forward in a manner that reflects the scenario.