

# WSU COVID-19 Town Hall – May 1

SPEAKER: We go live in 10.

PHIL WEILER: Well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to the latest in our series of COVID-19 town hall meetings. My name is Phil Weiler. I'm Vice President for Marketing and Communications here at Washington State University, and I will be our moderator for the next hour.

I'd like to welcome everybody who is joining us from all our various campus locations across the state, Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Pullman, and of course, our global campus. In addition, we have folks who are tuning in from our research facilities and our extension offices all across the state of Washington. I also want to extend a welcome to parents and students who are connecting from throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Welcome. We're glad you're able to join us.

Our format today is going to be a little bit different than what we've done in the past. There's been a lot of both decisions and developments that have taken place around COVID-19 over the last really just week or so, and we thought this would be a great opportunity for us to walk folks through that. So that people understand the information that they might have been seeing both from Washington State University, as well as from news media and other outlets.

So with that, we're joined today by Kirk Schulz, President of Washington State University. President Schulz is going to talk to us a little bit about what our plans are for the fall semester. He'll be followed by Craig Parks. Craig is our Vice Provost for System Innovation and Policy.

Craig's going to be talking about the work that Washington State University has done over the last several weeks to make sure that students had laptops and Wi-Fi access, when we made this move to distance learning. There were some students that didn't have great equipment and didn't have great connectivity. So Craig and his team have been working really hard to make sure that we get equipment to the people who needed it.

Also, Craig will just remind us what the grading options are for students. There have been accommodations that have been made in light of the fact that we had to make this switch. And so it's important for folks to understand what their options are, what those opportunities look like.

Next, we'll hear from Stacy Pearson, our Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Mary Jo Gonzalez, our Vice President for Student Affairs. And Mary Jo and Stacy will be talking about student fees, what are they, how are they set, what are the decisions being made around student fees? And then also what the plans are for people who need to move out of either an on-campus apartment or a residence hall.

And then we'll close the presentation portion with Glynda Becker-Fenter, who is the Assistant Vice President for Federal Engagement and Advocacy, and Brian Dixon, who is our Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services. Glynda and Brian will be talking about the Federal Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Stability Act, or as it's better known the CARES Act. So with the time remaining then, we will be using that to be able to answer questions. We've received about 140 questions previous to the start of our session today. So thank you to the folks who submitted those questions.

In addition, as we have done in the past, if people have questions live during the process, I would encourage you to post those questions in the Comments section of YouTube. We have a cadre of subject matter experts who are monitoring the comments in real time, and to the extent possible, they'll be answering the questions directly in the Comments section. And also, I'll use that to be able to grab some themes that I can ask the panelists to address. With that, let me turn it over President Schulz, and we can get started.

KIRK SCHULZ: Hey. Great. Thank you, Phil. Hey, good morning, cougs. Thank you all for joining us for our third COVID-19 virtual town hall, and congratulations. This is the last day of instruction for the Spring 2020 semester. We made it.

I was reflecting back over about eight weeks ago, when we started really actively talking about moving to an online instructional format. And I know there's been some bumps in the road, but our faculty and staff have stepped up in major ways. Our students have been resilient, and I just appreciate how everybody has gotten an all hands on deck type of approach. And thank you, glad that we made it to this particular point.

The fall semester, there's certainly been a lot of questions about what's going to happen in the fall? What's WSU going to look like? Are we going to have in-person instruction? Will the residence halls be open? All those kind of great questions.

This last week I put out on social media, it's been in the news media, we are planning on in-person instruction across all of our campuses at WSU in the fall. Now, immediately, people ask, well, what does that look like? How are we going to be safe? Are you taking into account public health-related advice? Is this going to be in conjunction with the governor's office and his directives?

The answer to that is we can't answer all those questions at this point, but I will tell you this. Health of our faculty, staff, and students is paramount. We're not going to do anything to put people at risk, where we're being foolish or foolhardy or not doing planning. But I want to remind everybody, we have several months between now and then, and we have some of the best and brightest people in the state of Washington and at WSU working on what this is going to look like.

So all summer, we will continue to put out information about what things are going to look like. We have creative people, and folks, it may not look exactly like it did last fall, but it's still going

to be that cougar experience, and that's really important to us for our families, for those incoming students, and things like that. So as you have questions, continue to ask us, and we'll do everything we can to answer those.

The final thing I want to say before I turn it over is we're really thrilled today to announce that Dr. Elizabeth Chilton will be joining WSU as our Provost and Executive Vice President this fall. Elizabeth is currently the Dean of the Harper College of Arts and Sciences at Binghamton University. She will be a professor of anthropology, did a great job on her interview, and we're really excited to have her and her husband, Michael, who will also be joining our Anthropology Department with us this fall.

So it's a great day to be a cougar. Thank you for your resiliency. Thank you for continuing to ask questions and engaging us. The cougar experience is going to be in full force in the fall. It may look a little different, but I can tell you, it's still going to have the attributes of being part of the WSU family that everybody expects. So Phil, thank you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Kirk. So next, I'd like to turn it over to Craig. If you could talk to us a little bit about some of the work that you and your team have been able to do to provide both laptops to students who had need for those, as well as providing Wi-Fi access. And I know the Wi-Fi access is continuing and expanding. So I'd love to hear about that, and then at the end, if you could also just remind folks about pass/fail options, as far as grading, and what advice you might have for them as they're trying to make that decision about what direction to go with grading.

CRAIG PARKS: Yes. So thank you, Phil, and thank you, President Schulz, for the wonderful introduction to today's session. As Phil mentions, we've been working hard to try to address the access needs of our students as they are at their homes or at a nearby residence. And we recognized early on that some students may not have access to equipment, in particular a computer or an internet access device, that would be powerful enough to allow them to engage in their classes in the way in which they need to and the way in which their instructors want them to.

Also, there is the issue of differential access to broadband around the state. We know that in some locations around the state, Wi-Fi signals are irregular, in some cases nonexistent, and we wanted to try to help as best we could with that situation as well. Regarding the need for machines, what we have done is created a Chromebook loaner program, and we currently have 162 students who are taking part, and the program is very simple.

Students simply need to go online. We have a request form. Student indicates a need for a Chromebook, provides their mailing information, and we send it, and that's it. It's no more complicated than that.

We do put a deposit on the student's account. That deposit is set to come due after the computer would be returned. The student returns the computer, it's in the proper condition, we just go in, and remove the charge. So no cost at all to the student.

It is also the case that, if the student would like to keep the machine-- and again, it's a Chromebook-- if the student would like to keep the machine, then they simply need to let us know. And they can hang on to it, and the charge on their account comes due. The charge that we put on is \$300, and I can tell you that we are not profiting from the Chromebooks. If a student buys it, we are selling it at our. So again, we're not benefiting at all from this program.

We have a dedicated help line at the Crimson Help Desk that students who are in our Chromebook program can go to, if they have questions. And the kinds of questions that we have seen, they've been minimal, but the kinds of questions we have seen have been things like, my professor would like me to access this particular shareware program. Can I do that?

And I don't think we've yet run into a situation where we've had to say no. We do load the machine with the Office 365 Suite and the Adobe Suite before we send it off, and we're finding that those two programs are all that almost all of our students need. But again, if they need access to particular programs, we are working hard to accommodate that.

The program is going to continue into the summer. So we are encouraging students who are enrolled in the summer session, who need a better or stronger machine than they have access to right now, to please go online and request. And again, that's all you have to do. It takes maybe two minutes to complete the form, and then we take it from there.

Regarding broadband access, we are also in the final stages of setting up a hotspot loaner program. This program will be ready for launch come summer. We have many hotspots that we will provide at no cost. They come with three months of service, and similar to the Chromebook program, a student simply needs to go online. We have a form that the student can access to indicate their need, and we take a look.

The one thing that we do do before we send it, we look at where the student is residing at and compare it against the coverage map. If the student is in a location where there is just not service for the company that we have contracted with, then we will work with the student on other options, which I'll mention in a minute. But if the student is in an area where there is coverage, and we're working with a provider that has good coverage for most of the state, so we think that this issue is going to be minimal. But if the student is in an area where there is good coverage, then we will send off the hotspot and, again, put a deposit on the student's account. And the student can use it for three months, basically the entire summer, and it is three months of full coverage, and it's an unlimited data plan.

If a student is, for whatever reason, not able to benefit from a hotspot where they are at, we are working with the state to set up a statewide parking lot Wi-Fi program. We're working with

the state broadband office on this. Funding has been secured to install about 100 parking lot broadcasters around the state.

45 of these will be housed at every WSU Extension Center in every county. We'll put one at each of the four WSU Research and Extension Centers, and there will be one tribal location as well. Student simply goes to one of these parking lots, works in their car, and they'll be able to access the internet, as if they were on campus. We expect that-- well, we are hoping-- that the installation of all of these broadcasters will be complete by June 1st.

In addition to these 45, another 60 are going to be put up statewide. These are not on the WSU network, but they're going to be installed at public locations, libraries, for example, fire stations, and schools. We're hoping that some donors will emerge who would be interested in contributing to this program to allow us to stand up and install even more of these parking lot broadcasters around the state.

WSU Extension is working on this. They've provided expertise. They've provided some counsel. They've provided some general know how, and they're continuing to work with the broadband office on this. So we're very excited for this, in particular for those students, and in general, for people who have struggled to get access to the internet for even basic things, like processing unemployment benefits or doing some online shopping, because they're engaged in social distancing. So again, working very hard on this.

I particularly want to call out the very just amazing efforts of our Infotech Office, our information technology systems. They've been at the heart of these efforts and have just done a dynamite job of setting this up and making it as easy as possible for students to request help and for us to be able to provide it. So I do want to acknowledge that.

PHIL WEILER: Craig, before we move on, I just noticed a couple of questions in the Comments section that probably are worth addressing. One is are these reserved for students on particular campuses, or is this a system-wide offering?

CRAIG PARKS: This is system wide, does not matter through which campus you are enrolled. All you need to do is let us know that you need it. We will ship. We ship the machines to you. We handle all the shipping costs for both the Chromebooks and the hotspots. These programs truly do not cost the student a dime.

PHIL WEILER: And are their Chromebooks still available if a student has a need coming up?

CRAIG PARKS: Yes. We do have some Chromebooks available, strongly encourage that people who need them inquire about them. We possibly will be adding to our inventory. I can't say for sure that we will, but we're working on doing that. But yes, the short answer is that we do have some machines left, and if a student needs one, please go online and inquire, and we'll get the machine to you immediately.

PHIL WEILER: Great. President Schulz, did you have something to add?

KIRK SCHULZ: Only that I just want to reiterate Craig's point. We will find resources to purchase more machines, if people need them. It's really important, if you need help this way, please fill out that form and ask and it's up to us to figure out ways to do that. So don't hesitate. That's what we're here for.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. So the other thing, Craig, we'd love to have you talk about is just a reminder about what the grading options that are available for students, as we move into finals next week.

CRAIG PARKS: Sure. So the key thing to understand is that we have modified the pass/fail structure. The way in which pass/fail has traditionally worked is that the student declares that they would like the class to be evaluated on a pass/fail basis system. If the student earns a C or better in the class, they receive a pass. It's a P on the transcript. If they receive a C minus or worse, they receive a Fail, or F, on the transcript.

Classes for which a P is received cannot be repeated. Classes for which an F has been received can be repeated. We have modified that structure for this semester, and we have also extended the deadline by which a student can request pass/fail grading.

We have added a third category. It's PP, and a PP grade will be assigned if a student receives a C minus a D plus or a D. Now, at once, if you receive a PP for a class, you may repeat it, if you want to, but it is considered a passing grade. So it's been broadened, and what results, at least for this semester, is that a student will receive an F, a student under pass/fail grading will receive an F, only if the letter grade that they would have earned in the class would have been an F.

So we've expanded it. We have also extended the deadline by which the student can decide to June 1st, which means that all of the student's final grades will be in and recorded. The student can take a look at the grades in all of their courses, and decide that they would like to switch one or more of the courses over to pass/fail.

Now, we strongly encourage any student who is considering switching any course to talk to an advisor, one of their major advisors, before they make that decision. There are certain courses in certain majors for which graduate schools, professional schools, employers might require that a letter grade be recorded on the transcript. We would not want a student to convert to pass/fail, get a P on the transcript, apply to a professional school, for example. And the school comes back and says, well, we need to see that you got a B plus or better in that class, but instead you have a P on there.

That will cause some real problems. The advisor, the major advisor, will be able to give the student excellent advice about whether converting a class from the letter grade to the modified

pass/fail structure is an advisable strategy. And then the student can take that information into account, when he or she makes their final decision about what to do.

And again, I do want to emphasize that the deadline has been extended to June 1st. So students do not have to make the decision now. They don't have to make the decision the day after the final grade is recorded. They will have at least a couple of weeks to make the decision, to think about it, to talk to advisors, and make a good, informed choice about what to do.

PHIL WEILER: Craig, I'm glad you talked about the idea of checking with an advisor. Because I know that, when Washington State University was contemplating making changes in our grading policy, one of the things we really wanted to do was to make sure we gave students options but also gave them the information they needed to make good choices for themselves. So I just want to echo, I think it is important students are thinking about pass/fail or other options. It's definitely advisable to check in with your major advisor and get the information you need, so you can make the best decision for yourself personally.

With that, I'd like to throw it over to both Mary Jo Gonzalez and Stacy Pearson, and Mary Jo, I'd love to have you again talk about student fees. How are student fees set? What are they used for? What's the decision that we've made around student fees? And then also if you could talk about plans around move out.

MARY JO GONZALES: Absolutely. So cougs, I've got to tell you how proud I am for you making it. We are at the end of the semester, and we know that you've done everything you can. We did announce yesterday, as we promised, our decision around student fees.

I do want to provide some context. When I was back here in the '90s, the student recreation fee was on the ballot for discussion. And what happened during that time is our students said very loudly and clearly, including me, that we needed additional recreation facilities in order to provide that holistic experience for students. And so that fee was passed, and we still are today managing the debt and the services around that facility.

The other part of that piece is our cougs just very recently passed two very important fees, again, developed, initiated, and voted on by students, and that was the Chinook fee. And our undergraduate students absolutely said that facility was important as a part of creating that living room environment for a portion of our campus. We also had the media fee which passed very recently which was designed to help our daily newspaper.

And so I think it's really important for students to understand that these fees were not driven by the administrative structure. It was students who said, we need these. There were a group of students who got together and said, as a part of that process, that we want to vote and make sure that that initiative gets through. The other part is it's important to note that students often are a part of the advisory decisions for this. We have a Cub Advisory Board, Dining and Dining Rate Setting Committee, as well as our Student Services and Activities Fee Committee who are driven and led by students who make decisions about these fees all the time.

Some important numbers for our community to know is that about \$12.5 million of those fees currently cover debt for the buildings that we have that again are around students and student services. On the Pullman campus alone, in our services and activities fee, we have over 100 permanent full-time staff and about 500 student employees who are paid through services and activities fees and who have continued to receive pay during this time. And it was because of that and all of the operational costs that are related, including insurance and utilities, even if the buildings aren't open, that we have made the decision to not refund and reimburse students for Spring 2020 mandatory fees.

We also know that, because of spring and the employees that we'll need to maintain in terms of employment but also the services that we will continue to provide online, including things like telehealth and telemedicine, our life fitness classes that are being offered, as well as all of our support for student involvement and our at Center for Civic Engagement. All of these critical programs are needed for students, whether they are here with us on all of our campuses or whether they are getting these services remotely. And so we want to let you know, we know you're probably disappointed with the decision, but we absolutely feel that it's important for us and for the experience for future cougs to maintain those fees and structures.

I'm going to jump into housing really quickly, and then I'll hand it over to Stacy, if she wants to add anything to that comment. We also know that this is the time of year when we get to do all of those close-out activities, including saying goodbye to you from our housing and residential facilities. We're sorry it is not what you wanted it to be, and we're going to create it as, just Phil said, with as many options as possible.

Students who lived in our university-owned apartments and residential halls received communication either last night or this morning, where we outlined a full-month period, from May 5th to May 31st, where students will be able to sign up and do a checkout time for them to move their properties and belongings out. We know that students have a variety of situations, and so we wanted to provide that flexibility. So you'll have an opportunity to bring individuals with you to help you move out.

There are some social distancing and safety considerations that we do want you to adhere to. They are outlined in the communication, but I do want to share a few. Masks are very important to wear. We call it respiratory etiquette. Feel free to put cougar bling on it. I know several of us have that, but please bring masks as you're moving out.

Please also know that we won't be providing cleaning supplies, like we typically do, in order to ensure that we're not communicating or transmitting COVID-19 amongst each other. We're also asking you to do things like only putting one household in the elevator at a time. We will be doing extensive cleaning between all the 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM period, when students will be and their families will be moving out. So please know that that is a part of our process as well. If you see someone coming behind and spraying, it is just about cleaning the property and making sure.



We also know that there are students who cannot get here. Those of you who are out of state, in California or other states, that have continuing lockdown-- not lockdown, sorry, stay home, stay healthy orders-- if you can't get here, we have identified two companies who have offered to help pack and store your items, and that is located on the bottom of the communication. So please feel free to reach out, go to [housing.wsu.edu](http://housing.wsu.edu), where the information is contained there. And Phil, we definitely look forward to any other questions that our students and their families and loved ones may have.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Actually, one question along those lines that we did receive in advance had to do with people who wanted to be able to keep their possessions in their residence hall room, because they were going to be in the same room the next fall. Is that something that we can do, or what's the status of a request like that? Mary Jo, is that something you can answer?

MARY JO GONZALES: Yeah, in terms of parking? Phil?

PHIL WEILER: No. I'm sorry. The question was there was a student who had asked if she could keep her possessions in her residence hall during the summer, because she was going to be planning to use that same room next fall.

MARY JO GONZALES: Sorry, Phil, I was hearing something else. As much as we want to do that with students, it's not something that we can do from a safety consideration standpoint. Now, that doesn't mean we're not going to work with students and have them-- in fact, on the email, there is an individual who is named and identified who actually she can pick up the phone-- that student or any student can pick up the phone and call and say, these are the circumstances that I'm facing. How can I navigate this move out? Because we know that there isn't one process that's going to work for everyone.

So feel free to check the email. Check the name. I'm not going to name it publicly. I don't want that person to get a million phone calls. But if you have exceptional circumstances, please feel free to reach out and let us know. We will help how we can.

PHIL WEILER: Great, and Mary Jo, I have one last question regarding fees for you. Are the fees the same for every campus, or are there different fee structures for different campuses?

MARY JO GONZALES: No, Phil, every campus has its own unique fees. For example, here on the Pullman campus and our Tri-Cities campus is where we have building fees. There are technology fees offered here and on the Vancouver campus, and again, there are a variety of fees depending upon the campuses and their needs. So it will look different for every student. Feel free to look on your My WSU account. They are all identified there and also at our student fees website at WSU.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, and Stacy, I have a question for you. Several people in advance had asked about parking fees. Some of our campuses do you have parking passes, and people

have a question about what's the status of those parking passes, and can they get a refund for those?

STACY PEARSON: Yes, Phil, thank you, and again, cougs, good job getting through this semester. It's certainly a historical time for all of us. So we really appreciate all that you did and all of your sacrifices.

As it relates to parking, I believe we discussed this in another town hall, just a reminder that you need to contact Parking and Transportation Offices and let them know when you want to cancel your parking, and you will be refunded the remainder of the term that you signed up for. So yeah, they're not automatically being refunded, because some people are still coming to those campuses. But all you have to do is go to [transportation.wsu.edu](http://transportation.wsu.edu) on the Pullman campus to take care of those actions. And then can't contact parking on the other campuses that you would be on, and those funds are eligible to be refunded, once you do that. I just want to note, this is consistent with our current policy, that any time you do wish to cancel, then the remainder that you have not used is refundable.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Now, let's go ahead and talk a little bit about the CARES Act. This is something that I know I've seen quite a bit of information referring to the CARES Act in the media, and honestly, it seems like I don't necessarily have all the details.

So Glynda, can you share with us at a high level, what is the CARES Act? What does it mean? What does it mean for students? What does it mean for universities? And then once we do that, Brian, I'd love to have you talk about the nitty-gritty details about CARES Act will have money that goes to students who meet certain criteria, and we'd love to have you, Brian, talk about what those criteria are. But the first, Glynda, can you share some information?

GLYNDA BECKER-FENTER: Sure, Phil. Thanks. First of all, my job is to advocate and be the voice of our students, faculty, and research, in Washington DC. So I work with our congressional delegation and the administration to advocate on your behalf. So I'm really excited to have the opportunity to hear some of these questions that are coming up.

I know that there's been a lot of news lately. We've all seen that Congress has passed several pieces of legislation providing additional funding to help stimulate the economy and help support research and health care efforts around the COVID pandemic. The second most recent one, which passed on March 27th, included almost \$2 trillion in funding for various aspects of our economy, including for the first time funding to support our students and institutions of higher education, as they are both impacted by the COVID virus.

Within that bill, there was \$14 billion provided to help students in institutions, and that funding is allocated to the institutions via a formula that was established by the Department of Education. Our entire congressional delegation, democratic and republican, supported this package, knowing how important it is to support the economy of Washington State and our students in the future. So it was a very big deal that that passed through Congress.

About half of that \$14 billion that I mentioned is going to go to direct student emergency aid which is what my colleague Brian Dixon is going to talk about in a minute. That funding was, like I mentioned, allocated through a formula based on a college's enrollment and weighted on their Pell grant recipients. It also excluded students who were exclusively online students before the pandemic.

Look, we know that more assistance is needed, more help is needed for our students in Washington and at home, and it's my job back here to highlight that, the needs of the cougar nation, with our delegation. So we'll continue to do that going forward, as future supplemental bills are considered by Congress. In fact, we're already hearing that the next bill will have a request of almost doubling the amount of money that will go to institutions of higher education and students to support us in this time. I think what we all really want to hear about though is how this funding is going to be allocated out to our eligible students. So I'm going to turn this over to my colleague Brian Dixon and let him talk to you about that.

BRIAN DIXON: Hello, everybody. It is really good to be here with you today. We know that there have been lots of challenges that our students and families are experiencing outside of the classroom, and financial support is one of those critical elements. And so we are certainly appreciative of the work that our delegation has done and our federal and state relations folks have done to advocate for support and different relief for our students. At a high level, what we are going to be doing is I'm going to share a website that we have available, and we'll make sure that that is able for everyone to be able to see and it is--

[INAUDIBLE]

OK, so hopefully, you can see that screen now. So it is that slide down a little bit. It is that [www.studentcare.wsu.edu/student-resources/financial-assistance](http://www.studentcare.wsu.edu/student-resources/financial-assistance). We'll make sure that that is available, so that everybody is able to see it.

So this talks a little bit about our Cares Act, and so at a high level, what we are doing is WSU got \$10.8 million to be able to award two direct aid to students. As Glynda mentioned, these funds were calculated based on the number of health students in the states that were impacted the highest. These funds have been targeted towards students who experienced expenses related to the disruption of our operations, shifting from in-person classes to online. So we're currently not able to utilize these funds for students who are on the global campus, who were enrolled in online programs prior to our shift in March to all online instruction.

The funds will be issued out, and we have a series of questions here. The funds will be issued out beginning next week, and so the week of March 4th. And we're going to shoot for as soon as at the beginning of the week as possible.

We have done this in a hybrid approach. So we have selected more than 9,000 students of our neediest students from both the students who are undergraduates, who were Pell eligible, undergraduate students who have an expected family contribution. So that's based on filling

out the FAFSA. We've selected that population who have expected family contribution of less than \$12,000, and we've also selected graduate and professional students who have an expected family contribution of less than \$5,500.

Students who are selected for these funds will see an additional award on their student account. And what you will get is an email from Student Financial Services asking you to be able to certify that you had expenses, and that certification form is fairly simple to look at. We are just finishing this right now, and it looks like this right here.

And so this is the certification form, and so you will get this from us. You'll get an email with instructions on how to log in, and all that you need to do, if you receive one of these funds, is to just check Yes. Yes, I had disruptions to my campus operations, and then just certify that the information is true, and then just hit submit. We will receive that information, and your funds will be dispersed to you just as they would any other funds.

None of the funds that are received through the CARES Act will pay any of your outstanding charges or balances. The entire amount will go to you, the student. So it's important that you make sure that your direct deposit information is updated and current. On that website, we do provide information and a video on how to make sure your direct deposit information is up to date and current. And students will receive a word between \$500 and \$1,500, depending on need and also depending on whether or not you have dependent children.

We are doing our best to get these funds out to students right away. So please stay tuned to your emails, so that we can get all of those funds to you as quickly as possible. And as I mentioned, we're doing a hybrid approach, so not all of the funds are being awarded to preselected students. Funds will also be available via request, and so we're partnering closely with Mary Jo Gonzalez and the dean of students, as well as the chancellors at the various campuses to create a simple process for students to be able to go in to request additional funds through this process.

We did not get the opportunity to be able to offer these particular funds to students who do not have a FAFSA on file or for students who are undocumented. But through the commitment of the leadership of the university, we are able to identify institutional and private funds to be able to support undocumented and DACA students who are currently receiving state aid through the university, and information will be coming out about that shortly as well. So we're really excited about that.

I have a couple of other quick things I'd like to add. I know that Craig talked about the grade changes, the pass/fail. I know really during this time of year, students are often concerned about scholarship renewals and how might switching a course the pass/fail impact that?

The Student Financial Services, we are reviewing and saying that if students have instead of 24 graded credits, if they have 20 graded credits, we look for the cumulative GPA, your terms and conditions. We will continue to renew those scholarships, if you do not meet those criteria, and

there's something related to COVID. You will have the opportunity to be able to appeal, and we'll be very supportive and understanding of that particular process.

Also, as we're getting near the end of the semester, satisfactory academic progress, so the number of credits that you earn in your cumulative GPA that allows you to continue to receive your financial aid. We've been working actively with our federal and our state officials to get relief around that, and we're going to do everything that we can to be supportive to students regarding their satisfactory academic progress. And so again, our typical standards require students have a 2.0 GPA. So if you're taking a course pass/fail, that doesn't go into your cumulative GPA. It will not impact your satisfactory academic progress at all.

So just wanted to get those two things out, and we are actively awarding for summer. So we are open for business and sending out some of our awards on a regular basis. As you enroll in classes, we'll be sending you those funds out as well.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Brian. So I'm going to try and recap, and correct me if I make any mistakes. But based on certain criteria, students will be eligible to receive between \$500 and \$1,500. All they need to do is to click Yes on that website that indicates that they have had a disruption to their lives due to COVID-19.

That money then will be sent to their account through direct deposit. There's really nothing more that students who are eligible need to do. But in addition to that, there are also emergency financial grants for students who either may not meet the eligibility or may have additional need, and that there'll be a simple form for them to fill out to make those requests. Is that the project in a nutshell?

BRIAN DIXON: Yes, sir. That is the way that this process will work. We know that there are students who aren't being able to be served under this program, and we're actively working on both dispersing private funds that we have available, as well as working to continue to raise private funds that are available. So yes, please do reach out, and we will do our best to get this money out to you quickly.

You'll get an email with instructions. It'll also, in your My WSU account, it'll show up on your To Do List. So for students, you can be looking in your To Do List, and we expect this to be ready by early next week.

PHIL WEILER: So speaking of private funds, my understanding is we received some great news just a few days ago regarding support for these emergency fund grants. Is that correct?

BRIAN DIXON: Yeah that is correct. We are always so appreciative of our cougs and how generous our cougs are. We've seen it throughout this entire process, through students making decisions about how they do their credits. I know Mary Jo shared some of those stories.

And so donating money to Cougs Feeding Cougs, but we just recently got word that the Crimson Opportunity Grant just received over a million dollars for the upcoming year. And that is certainly a major area of question. A major area of concern is what kind of support am I going to have for this upcoming year, especially when maybe some of our family savings have gone down, maybe one of my parents have been on furlough, or these types of things? And so if those are your situations and cases, we do really encourage you to reach out to the Financial Aid Office, to go to our website. It's [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu), and we do have information on special circumstances.

It is also on that CARES Act page as well. So if you have that information, we can get you some help and some assistance. And if you haven't filled out for financial aid before, and you're not sure about how to go about doing that process, we do have folks in our office who are taking calls. Well, not in our office, but working remotely, who are actively live taking phone calls, and you can you can give us a call. And so if you go to that same website, [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu) and click on Contact Us, you'll see all of our information, our email, our phone number, and we just look forward to talking to you and helping you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. So it sounds like [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu) is a great place to start, if you have questions about student financial aid.

BRIAN DIXON: Yes, sir.

PHIL WEILER: Do you have anything that you wanted to add? I know that the Dean of Students Office also has the ability to help students when they're facing difficulties.

MARY JO GONZALES: Yeah. Actually, there's two there's a two-fold prong to this question, and I do want to thank our colleagues in Student Financial Services. We have a ton of students on work study, and what they did is they made sure that those students were receiving, especially those who were employed and were working for example in our front offices or other places when our facilities needed to shut down. So I want to make sure we do just a thank you to the Student Financial Services and making sure that those students who are made whole financially.

We also know that there are students who weren't eligible for work study but who also have been working continuously. I do want to let you know that there are still jobs listed on a Handshake. So please, if you're looking for employment, many of these opportunities for students can be done remotely, and those that can be done remotely are being done remotely. And we also have some physical-- for example, in the cub that are still being employed. Those are some students who are staying here and staying behind.

And so just want to make sure you know that student employment is still one of the things that we offer here at WSU, and we'll continue to offer. But go look on a Handshake, that is the place to go. And don't forget that Brian's website that he announced, the [studentcare.wsu.edu](http://studentcare.wsu.edu) is the place to go to find out information about even applying for those emergency grants that are available through various units across the system. And so we'll continue to share that

information with you. You probably see it from some of our colleagues who are putting it in the web stream, the YouTube stream, but please know those services are available, and support is available if you ask.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Mary Jo. So [studentcare.wsu.edu](http://studentcare.wsu.edu), another important website for folks to keep an eye on. At this point, what I'd like to do, we've got about 15 minutes left. I'd like to open up to some of the questions that we've received both in the chat, as well as that we received in advance on the website.

And this first one I am going to address to President Schulz. This is a question I've heard from a number of people just this week alone, and it has to do with the fact that the governors stay home, stay healthy order is scheduled to run through May, and it's kind of a different twist on this. I'm hearing from several different faculty and staff members who are worried that they may need to be coming back to the office very quickly, and they don't have childcare lined up yet, if they have young kids at home. And so do you have a sense at the point that we do have people returning to the offices? Are we going to get plenty of notice to be able to make other arrangements at home, before we have to report in person?

KIRK SCHULZ: Phil, great question, and one, we're in very regular communication with Governor Inslee. So we do have some time, some sense of what the governor is thinking, and what types of things he wants to be doing. And so I want to make sure that our coug faculty and staff and employees know that, one, we're going to continue to be really flexible. People's personal health is going to continue to be paramount, and there's going to be some folks that, even if we're allowed to go back with appropriate social distancing, will still need to work from home or have other types of options, and we're going to continue to be very, very flexible.

We'll work with human resources. We'll work with supervisors. We want to make sure that, as we start back, if you will, to some in-person things, as we're allowed to do so, we just want to do it carefully, thoughtfully, and with our employees best interests at heart. So I don't want anybody thinking that, all of a sudden, they're going to get a phone call at night and say, hey, tomorrow morning, everybody's got to be in. And we're going to operate in a really mindful way to make sure that this is well done.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Along those lines, we received a question that asks is WSU considering the test-trace-separate recommendations that were outlined in a recent New York Times article. I think it was, if I remember correctly, the president of Brown University that had laid out some particular criteria, and also maybe talk a little bit about some of the work that you are doing yourself with other universities, here in the state of Washington, around establishing criteria for return to class and return to work.

KIRK SCHULZ: Thank you, Phil. I'm working with University of Washington president Anna Mari Cauce. We're leading a group in the state of Washington, working in conjunction with the governor's office, with our colleagues in the community college, and Technical College sector as to what needs to be in place for us to go back in the fall and have more in-person types of

activities in all of our campuses. So there have been some ideas floated by different parts of the higher education community about what it would take to go back.

It's really too early to comment on any one of those things. Every state's different, and I really want to emphasize to folks that what may work on the east coast or the Midwest or somewhere else may not work in our state. It also may vary based on whether you're in an urban-serving campus or whether you're in a more rural location. So as people read those things, we're taking all those ideas in. We're going to be more public in the next couple of weeks about what types of things we think we can do.

And there's also complications around privacy issues and what we can and can't require for people on, essentially, open campuses. And so I just want folks to keep in mind that we need all ideas. We need great ideas. We're going to sort through, and we're going to make sure that they're ones that fit our campus, our community, and where we need to go.

PHIL WEILER: Great. That makes sense. Thank you. This is a question maybe for Mary Jo, maybe for Craig as well, and perhaps for you, Kirk, also. We had a prospective parent asking about our new student orientation program. Some campuses refer to them as Alive. Other places call them SOAR.

But as the academic year comes to a close, many times at this point in the calendar, we're looking toward those new student orientation sessions. What's the status of those, and what do we think the future will look like as they continue through the summer? Mary Jo, are you the right person to take that?

MARY JO GONZALES: Yeah. I'll start, and then I think Craig might want to contribute some as well. One of the hardest things about COVID-19 is that we are missing some of the most amazing times of the year together, like graduation, and Alive happens to be one of those things, where we bring in households, family members, loved ones of cougars who are going to start with us in the fall. We have a team working both in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs who are working together to bring a lot of that content alive for now and put it online remotely, so that people can see.

Typically, we have a residence hall tours. We have conversations with academic advisors. We learn about the colleges during that time, and we sing cougar fight song which is something I have absolutely missed. So please know, a lot of those offerings are happening.

We want you to sign up as soon as possible. We know that we will be offering online sessions through June. We are waiting for the decision. So hopefully, we'll be able to do some work in July, but that will be a rolling deadline, meaning we'll let you know as soon as we're able to whether or not we'll be able to have those in-person in July.

But we encourage you, absolutely, to go look on new student programs and explore the videos that are available. We have students who are there answering questions. Our orientation



counselors are available to have conversations with you about the experiences that you would have while you're here. Craig, did you want to add anything related to Alive?

CRAIG PARKS: Just to largely, Mary Jo, to reinforce what you're saying, that we're working very hard to have the online experience be as similar as possible to what the student would experience if they were physically on the campus that they will be attending. And we recognize that there will be some things that they can't reliably be duplicated, but we think we can get really close on that. And everyone is working very hard on that, between Student Fairs and Academic Affairs, and it's, as with a lot of things that we've been doing here, we've made some I think remarkable progress in a short period of time.

KIRK SCHULZ: Phil, one thing I want to mention on SOAR, Alive, any of that, really, really important for folks to sign up and to do those. You can say, well, gee, you know how important is that? It is a really first step to academic success, and we need families to continue to sign up for those. Sign up for ones that work for you. We will continue to keep everybody posted. This is really, really a critical step to allow us to help, work with families, advise you on the types of things that you need to be doing to be ready to be successful at all of our campuses.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Kirk, this is another question I think for you. We received in advance a couple of questions from both graduate students, as well as faculty members, asking about when we think labs might be able to reopen for non-COVID-19 related research? What are your thoughts on timing, and what kinds of things do we need to have in place before we can say that we're going to open those labs back up?

KIRK SCHULZ: We are very eager, like virtually every major research university, to restart a lot of our research that has been put on hiatus, as we have vacated our physical campus and extension types of locations. That being said, I'll go back to some of my previous comments. We are not going to reopen until we have appropriate social distancing guidelines in place, till we make sure that our students, faculty, and staff who are back doing that scholarship and research. That's so important to our state our nation and to their projects to be able to graduate with their masters and PhD degrees.

I was in a conversation with other Pac-12 universities this week-- Stanford, Cal Berkeley, UCLA. All of us are working really, really hard on what does that need to look like, so that we can do that safely? I don't have a time frame, and I don't want to speculate and say it's going to be done within x days or number of weeks. But I will say, this is a high priority for all of us to make sure that we get this going again as soon as practically possible. But every state is different, and we're going to continue to work with the governor's office to make sure that when we reinstitute this we do it in conjunction with the best public health information that we can get.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. We are getting toward the end of our hour. President Schulz, do you have any closing remarks you'd like to make?

KIRK SCHULZ: Well, once again, I think all of us on this particular call celebrate the end of the term, and we'd like to celebrate the end of the term, because graduation is coming up. We have a chance to be around families and cougs and people who have these amazing stories about how the university has affected them, how we have helped provide opportunities, how faculty, staff, and their student colleagues have helped them down this really amazing journey that so many of our graduates are on. And you know what, we're missing that.

I can speak for all of my colleagues that this is a highlight of the year for us that we're missing. It's a highlight for our families. That being said, don't let the fact that we're not going to be able to do this in-person commencement ceremony next week the way everybody was anticipating take anything away from the accomplishments of our graduates, our students who have persevered and made it through this term.

And once again, I want to thank our faculty and staff who have continued to go way beyond anything we could have expected, to put students first, to be flexible, to figure out good, creative ways to do things. Everything's not been perfect, but boy, I've been amazed how quickly everybody's pivoted. So those cougs who are finishing up, this wasn't the way we wanted to say thank you, but hey, we're going to do it. We're going to wish you the best of success. Stay connected to us, and good luck on finals this next week.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank. You so president Schulz, you mentioned commencement at graduation, and I'd like to just remind folks who are listening in that we will be doing a first-ever, system-wide, virtual graduation celebration a week from Saturday. That's open to anyone who wants to participate. Whether you're graduating or not, whether you've signed up for anything or not doesn't matter. We encourage you to visit [experience.wsu.edu](http://experience.wsu.edu), and there'll be a link there. It will be, as I said, the first time that we've ever had all of our campuses together recognizing this milestone for our students.

Let me take a look at my notes here. Just a reminder, again, it'll be Saturday, May 9th. It will start at 10:00 AM. However, we're encouraging people to connect a little bit early. If you connect by 9:45, we want to start things off by having a montage of students' favorite photos, videos, and memories. We had really a nice chance for all of our students across the state to be able to share what they love about their institution and their particular campus.

Again, we're going to be celebrating the accomplishments of students. This is not taking the place of the actual commencement exercise. Our hope is that we will be able to do live commencement, in August. Each campus is setting a date that works best for them. So I would encourage you, if you are on whatever campus, check out the website for your campus to see the time and location about when that will happen, in August, if you are a graduating senior or a graduate student.

The other thing I'll say to you is we really want to have a lot of student-provided content for this event. It will be live, but we are going to use the opportunity to share student's favorite

memories. There is a favorite video, short videos, their favorite photos. It'll be a chance for you to be able to let your loved ones see what life on campus was like for you.

If you want to submit content for that, you can send it to use the hashtag coug grad, so again, hashtag coug grad. We'll collect those in advance. We'll also have a tag wall available that will be showing those live. So that's one thing to keep in mind.

Another thing also, our next COVID-19 town hall meeting is scheduled for two weeks from today. That'll be Friday, May 15th, and note that we'll have a different time. Our meeting time for May 15th is going to be 10:30 AM instead of 11:00. We're really going to be focusing I think a lot on faculty and staff issues at that particular one. Today, we spent a lot of time focused on students and trying to answer some questions for parents, but faculty and staff will be the primary focus for the 15th.

Again, if you have questions about COVID-19 and Washington State University's response, between now and then, you can always visit the WSU Home Page, [wsu.edu](http://wsu.edu). There'll be a link to our WSU COVID-19 update website. That includes frequently asked questions, information articles, and just about anything you need to know about how Washington State University is responding in this era of COVID-19.

So with that, I want to thank our panelists. Thank you all for making yourselves available, and a special thanks to our subject matter experts. I've been watching on the Comments section. There's been a tremendous amount of activity, as there has been in the past, but some great answers to questions in real time, which I really appreciate.

So thank you to our subject matter experts, and then finally, thank you to all of you for joining us. We've had tremendous response for these town hall meetings, and we're glad that people find them valuable. So we will continue to do those in the future. Enjoy your afternoon, and always, go cougs.

MARY JO GONZALES: Go cougs.

GLYNDA BECKER-FENTER: Go cougs.

CRAIG PARKS: Go cougs.

STACY PEARSON: Go cougs.