

# WSU Parental Panel – May 14

PHIL WEILER: Good evening, everyone. Welcome to Washington State University's first parent information forum for parents and supporters of future Cougs. My name is Phil Weiler. I'm Vice President for Marketing and Communications here at Washington State University.

I'm going to serve as our moderator today. We've got a great panel of experts--

[ECHO DELAY]

--who are going to help us out. Whoops. Bear with me there. Sorry about that.

So again, my name is Phil Weiler, Vice President, Marketing and Communications for Washington State University. Tonight's session is the first of a series of three events that we're going to be holding for families and their supporters of incoming, first time Cougars. Each session, we're going to have a different panel of experts who are going to be talking about issues of importance for that particular period of time.

As a parent who sent three kids off to college on my own, I can tell you that I understand, as a parent, that this is a time of lots of questions. It can be a bit bewildering, a bit confusing. And so the purpose of tonight's event is really to be able to get answers to those questions for you and help you become an expert parent of a college student. So we're here to answer those questions.

Tonight, we have a panel of experts from Enrollment; from Student Financial Services, which is what we parents would know as financial aid, but there's more to it than just that; Student Affairs, and then also Academic Affairs. We'll start off with some brief comments from our panelists. And then we'll shift into some of the questions that we've received.

We've had over 200 questions coming in from parents so far, which is fantastic. That's great news. It's many more questions than we're going to be able to handle today.

But one thing that you should know is, if you're watching on YouTube, in the chat feature there, if we say something that sparks a question for you, feel free to toss it in the comments section there. We have a small army of subject matter experts who are monitoring that chat for us. And they will try and answer your questions in the chat feature, sort of live, in real time. So that's going to be a great opportunity there to make sure your questions get answered.

So with that, let me introduce our four panelists. First we have Michelle Lewis. Michelle is Assistant Vice President for System Wide Enrollment Planning. We also have Brian Dixon, he's Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services. Next, we have Dr. Jill Creighton, she is the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students in the Division of Student Affairs.

And then finally, Dr. Terese King, who's Executive Director of University Advising and Director of the Academic Success and Career Center. I'll give a little plug for that. That's where your student should go if they've got questions about academic advising, about career coaching, about tutoring.

I will say just one more little editorial comment here, when you ask students, after they graduate, what do you wish you knew then that you know now, what do you wish you knew as a freshman, a lot of times you'll hear them say, I wish I would have gone to the Academic Success and Career Center earlier or I wish I would have gone to the Dean of Students Office earlier. Because those two people are the ones who were there to make sure that your sons and daughters are successful academically, in their daily lives, making sure that their physical health is taken care of, their mental health. And so those are definitely places that you should be pointing your students if they ever have any questions or concerns.

So enough of me talking. Let me turn it over to Michelle. And we'll go ahead and get started.

MICHELLE LEWIS: Right. Thank you so much, Phil. And welcome, everybody. We really are excited to take the opportunity to address everyone to receive your questions. And as somebody in Enrollment and, like Phil, as a parent of a college age students myself, we get the mix of excitement and angst and questions, especially in our current climate. It's a year like no other, to say the least.

And so our goal tonight is to answer as many questions as we can, knowing that there are still a lot of decisions that are yet to be made. And as our university leaders are working really hard, working together, working with experts to be really thoughtful and mindful of decisions to make sure that we're providing the safest experience for your students, which is the highest priority, it is also the best experience that we can for in-person experiences, so that your students can really feel what it means to be a Cougar. So that that's important to us all around, as administrators, as parents, and as your advocates and your student's advocates. So I just wanted to say that on behalf of all of us.

We've had over 1,000 parents that actually registered for tonight's event. And so we're very excited about that. And that speaks to the need to do more of these. And so we're definitely going to be doing that.

I wanted to talk for just a minute about how we transition from in-person experiences on the WSU Pullman campus to virtual experiences. And I know I sent a note out to all of you last week which highlighted some of those things. But just wanted to assure you that your students are receiving personalized invitations to a variety of different opportunities, based on their individual interests, related to academics, Greek life, student organizations, student financial services, and all kinds of different things. So make sure you're asking your students about those emails and what types of communications that they're getting.

And we also wanted to put it out there that your students do have a personal admission counselor that is assigned to them. And so they should be receiving text messages, email messages, probably some postcards for them, as well. And we want to encourage you as parents and supporters to reach out to your personal admission counselor.

If you don't know who that is, you can go to [rep.wsu.edu](http://rep.wsu.edu) and search, based on your student's current school that they're attending. There's a lot of questions that many of you asked tonight that were very specific to your situation or your student's unique challenges or questions. And so we also wanted to reassure you that our admission counselors are already divvying up those questions based on the students that they are assigned to serve. And they will be reaching out to you and your students individually over the next week to address some of those questions.

So with that, I just wanted to, again, welcome you all. And I will turn it back over.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Michelle. Next, Brian, do you want to spend a few minutes talking to us about financial aid and the other kinds of services that you provide in Student Financial Services.

BRIAN DIXON: Sure. Good evening, everyone. Glad to be with you and have the opportunity to talk. What I'd like to answer first is a couple of the most common financial aid questions that happen every single year.

I was in the exact same situation that you folks are in right now just a year ago. I sent our youngest off to college halfway across the country. And so I certainly empathize and understand how important it is that you feel like your children are going to be well-supported and that you feel well-positioned to be good advocates for them.

Some of the most common questions that we receive every year are questions around a change of income. In this particular year, we've gotten more questions than historically, as you might imagine. And you might be in this situation, where maybe someone in your family got laid off, maybe someone got furloughed, maybe someone's hours got cut back.

And so, on our main financial aid website, [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu), at the top, there is a section that's called COVID. And there will be some information there that will have a question about if I've had a loss of income. And it will lead you to a form where you can communicate about those special circumstances that are going on and happening.

If you'd like to have a conversation about that first, we do have financial aid advisors who are available from 9 to 3 at this particular time. About the middle of June, we look to expand those hours back to a larger portion of the day. As you'd imagine, we have a large number of our staff working remotely, as well, and balancing a lot of different items.

In addition to the special circumstances, lots of questions come up regarding scholarships. And so on our website we do have some links from doing scholarship searches. There have been some questions about will my student find out about a scholarship or information.

And we will get that out as soon as possible. Scholarships are awarded both centrally from the central office, as well as the individual colleges that you're a part of. So we appreciate your patience as we work through that.

We are also getting a fair number of questions that parents have heard about the CARES Act funds, which was the funds that the government allocated specifically for college students. Our primary focus at this point in time has been the current students who are enrolled. And we have actively awarded about \$8.6 million dollars to help those students who've been displaced and have had additional expenses related to this particular year.

There will most likely be more money left as we come into this upcoming year. And we will take those requests as your student gets prepared to enroll into the upcoming semester.

So the main things I just want to remind you about is on our site, again, [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu), you'll see information about applying for jobs. We know it's also really common during this time of year that you're thinking about either a work study job or just a regular job to apply on campus. This past year we did work to support students, both in-person and remotely. We just want to keep students safe.

And you'll see a number of helpful videos on our site as well. And if you need to, you can also schedule an appointment with one of our virtual advisors and have a Zoom meeting conversation and ask some of your specific questions. So I think that's a good place to stop.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thanks, Brian. Next, let me turn it over to Jill in Student Affairs.

JILL CREIGHTON: Hi, Cougar families. Welcome. I'm so glad to meet you virtually. Jill Creighton, she, her, hers. I serve as the Dean of Students here on campus. Representing the Division of Student Affairs, I want you to know that the Division is here and ready to support students when we're able to repopulate our campus.

This division of student affairs includes everything from housing and residence life, to counseling and psychological services, to Cougar health medical services, to our recreation centers and clubs and organizations, and identity-based connection points, and everything in between. So we miss our students terribly and can't wait to have everyone back when it's safe and healthy to do so. I see a lot of questions popping up about residence life and housing, specifically. So I'm just going to take a minute to address some of those.

Normally, when we're in kind of regular operations, we would normally put out housing assignments in the early summer. But given the environment that we're in now, we are going to

delay some of those housing assignments. And I know a lot of you have questions about when will I know where I'll be living and what will move in look like. And we are still looking at that.

We haven't made final announcements related to those processes at this point. But we promise we will be in contact when that happens. We'll be updating our website at [housing.wsu.edu](http://housing.wsu.edu) when we have that information available. But the number one thing that you can do right now to be prepared is to confirm for us that you're coming and you want to live with us. And you can do that at [housing.wsu.edu](http://housing.wsu.edu).

The other thing I see popping up here is questions around Greek life. And if you wanted to join a fraternity or sorority this coming fall, what will that look like if we don't have the same look and feel to what recruitment might have been even last fall. We are working with our national partners, the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the National Interfraternity Council and many of the multicultural Greek governing bodies to understand what that direction might look like. So we do still plan to have an opportunity for you to join a fraternity or a sorority this fall, but it might look a little different than if, let's say, you had an older sibling who did it.

But again, welcome. I'm looking forward to taking more of your questions.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you, Jill. Let's turn it over to Terese.

TERESE KING: Good evening, everyone. I am Terese King. And I'm excited to join you all, too.

Most of the questions that I would answer really revolve around the Alive program and the delivery of that program. We're excited to continue our orientation program. We know that that program is important in the transition for students and parents and family as they join the Cougar family.

So we are going to have a total of 14 sessions throughout the summer and fall that will address all of your questions in terms of where will I be living, what are the costs associated, what if I don't like my roommate. You know just common questions that come up that are all something that we have gone through, many of us ourselves, when we transitioned to the college campus.

Also, being the Director for the Academic Success and Career Center, I can talk about the advising process, and then, of course, registration. I know there were questions surrounding that. And the Alive program is where our students will go and advise and register, meet with an academic advisor, and register for their courses in the fall semester. So Alive really delivers a lot of that transitional material. And we do plan on having Alive in the June month, we'll be online delivery.

But there are three components to our Alive program, to our orientations. One is really the learning modules, or learning components, the pieces that you need to sample from based on your interest or your unique needs. And then, we'll transition to live stream for our June sessions.

And those presentations, whether they are on a Saturday, Sunday, Monday, that means our presenters are coming to you on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. We're here in the daytime as well as in the evenings for those live presentation streams. And then we have an in-person component that will happen in the fall.

So we are recognizing that even though June will have some online delivery, that we will have in-person components with you, both parents and students, when you join us in the fall, when you're moving in. And we want to make sure that you're also connecting with our current students throughout the program, so wanted to mention that.

And again, I see there's a lot of different questions. But I want to make sure I share my time. So I look forward to answering them.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Terese. Yes, you are absolutely right.

The chat feature I am seeing is definitely getting well-used. So thank you parents and supporters. I appreciate you taking advantage of that opportunity. And also, again, thank you to our cadre of subject matter experts who are answering those questions really quickly.

I know there's a lot of questions that people have had, both in this chat feature as well as online, questions about COVID-19 and what are the impacts going to be for us in the fall. Before I jump into that, I thought I'd maybe hit some of those questions that I saw that were submitted that I think are perennial kinds of parent questions. They were certainly questions that I had when my kids were getting ready to leave for school. And so I'm going to start off with those if I can.

There was one question that a parent asked about cars. Wanted to know, first of all, is it acceptable for a freshman to have a car on campus, and is it necessary? And so I have a personal opinion about that.

But let me turn over to you all as the experts. And let us know, is it OK for our student to bring a car to campus? And is that going to be a necessity for them if they're living on campus?

JILL CREIGHTON: I think I can jump in on this one, Phil. You know, we do have permit options for resident hall-based students. They are limited. They are not unlimited. And so certainly, it's something to ask yourself, if your student does need their car here.

The Palouse is quite transportation available for many students. There are buses that regularly run through campus. And so there are opportunities for students to get down into the community and also around campus on public transportation.

And if you're a family who's coming from the West Side, there's also a bus that stops right outside of the main administration building that goes over to the West Side and makes, I believe, two stops on the West Side once or twice a week. I'd have to double check that. But it's

called the Wheatland Express. So if you want to Google for the Wheatland Express, you can see that there are options.

It really depends on your own family situation. But I do believe that students who are able to spend more time on campus get better engaged with our community. They have better opportunities to find leadership options and to create connections with other students.

That car can be helpful in some environments. But also be aware that we have a pretty real winter here in Pullman. So if your student is not used to snow driving, that might be something to consider from a safety perspective, as well.

PHIL WEILER: Yeah. I'll just sort throw in again as my own two cents, I hear this question a lot from parents this time of year, anecdotally. And I guess I would say it is not necessary that your student has a car.

I'll echo what Jill had to say. The city of Pullman has a great bus system. Even for those students who are living off campus in apartments, there are multiple opportunities for public transportation to get you to and from either your apartment, or if you wanted to go downtown, or go elsewhere in the community.

There are bus passes available. They're provided as a service to students. So I would encourage parents, if they are questioning that, to take a look and see what the public transportation options are. Because I think it is definitely a good option for everybody.

A similar question that we saw, again, having to do with housing, was questions about if a student is moving into a residence hall, do they need to bring their own microwave oven? Do they need to bring their own box fan? What are your recommendations about what people should bring? Do they have to bring a mini-fridge, that kind of thing.

JILL CREIGHTON: It's a great question and we have various types of residence hall setups within our university housing system. And so the first thing I would ask you to do is go online and look at the residence hall that you might be assigned to determine what that looks like. But we have common areas for cooking in every residence hall, which includes options for community refrigeration, community cooking in some of our residence halls, and microwaves and things like that. So you know, personal preference, again, in this area, but we definitely encourage students to utilize the community features that we have already put out for many of our residents to enjoy.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Jill. So let's jump into some of these COVID-19 related questions.

Brian, you did mention a little bit ago about if parents have a change in income. And it's probably worth having us repeat that again. Can you talk a little bit about what parents should

be doing if they are in sort of an uncertain search situation with regard to their income at the moment?

BRIAN DIXON: Yeah. I appreciate that. So if you're in a situation where your family has had a change of income for various reasons, the first and foremost important thing is that you fill out the financial aid application, either the FAFSA or the WAFSA, whatever is appropriate in your situation. And we will go through and request any documentation that we need.

And once we've done that, there'll be an opportunity for you to go onto our site. And again, you can just go to [financialaid.wsu.edu](http://financialaid.wsu.edu). In the top banner, there's a COVID-19 banner. And you click on that.

And about the fourth or fifth question, there's one about loss of income. And it will lead you into a special circumstances form where you can communicate and you can share with us about the specifics of your situation. And we can evaluate how we might be able to help, how we may be able to assist.

Now it is common sometimes for families to have a loss of income and for it to not significantly change the amount of financial aid that is available to you. We will do our best to try to help and assist in any way that we can and match you up with any available resources that are there. And so as you continue to have questions or issues or concerns, again, you can call us.

And our contact information is in that same section. And you can give us a phone call, you can give us an email. And all of the campus and their contact information are listed there. And we'll do our very best to help you.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. I know a lot of parents are concerned about what does fall instruction look like. I know that WSU president Kirk Schulz has spent a lot of time talking about the work that we're doing to make sure that we can do some fashion of face-to-face instruction in the fall. I'm wondering if anyone else has anything they can add to that to help parents understand what we expect the fall to look like at this stage?

TERESE KING: I can jump in on that. At this stage, we do expect to have face-to-face instruction. But we're also recognizing that we need to do that in accordance to Governor Inslee's four phase smart start approach to reopening.

I like to think of it as resurging into, as our student population grows, within our campus and within our classrooms. That may mean that rather than having a large classroom populated with all the students, we do some combination a portion of the students attending class one day a week and the other parts online, while the next grouping of students come into the classroom. So it's really going to be a combination of things.

Our faculty are spending a lot of time thinking about how they're going to deliver engaging classes. We had very little turnaround time to switch to the online environment. And that was just as new for many of our faculty and staff as it was for our students.

So really kind of taking some time now this summer to rethink that, how can we deliver things in multiple modes that are helpful to our students, and also what resources are there that if our students are not preferring the online learning environment, if that's something that they would have in the fall, how can we help them and supplement that through tutoring, supplemental education with their peer groups, ways to get students connected and do things a little bit more creatively. But again, we really do want to be doing face-to-face as much as possible. And it's really a plan to go in both directions-- make a plan and know that we may have to switch from one to another as the semester and the recommendations go along.

PHIL WEILER: Thanks, Terese. I agree with that. I think that we are looking at trying to do everything we can to make sure we're in face-to-face. But also recognize that if we need to pivot, we can do that.

And one nice thing for Washington State University is the fact that I know that WSU was one of the leaders in this idea of online education, actually, several decades ago. And so we have a really deep knowledge of how to take instruction and convert it from face-to-face to an online environment. And so we actually had a whole group of instructional experts who were able to help our faculty members when we had to make that switch here in the spring semester. We were able to provide training and technical tools so they could make that change and students could have a really good experience. So I think now that we've got the summer to be able to continue to build on that, it's going to be an even more robust system, if we have to make that conversion to some sort of online learning in the future.

One of the questions that I've seen, and maybe this is a question for you, Jill, has to do with just student health in general. I know when I was a parent, I was concerned about what would happen if my child got sick, whether it was COVID-19 or something else. What kinds of services are available for students on campus if they become ill and need to see some kind of a health care provider?

JILL CREIGHTON: We're very lucky to have Cougar Health Services on our campus, which is a fairly comprehensive, what I would describe as kind of a general medicine practice. I'm not a medical doctor. So I want to be very clear about that with our audience. But we do have several physicians on staff, as well as nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, et cetera, to work with our students on basic health needs.

The Cougar Health Services area also is encompassing of mental health services. And we have a number of psychologists and counselors on staff that can work with students directly. And the Cougar Health Services area will work with students on what the insurance components look like and a number of other things. So we do have those basic things covered.

What we don't have on our campus is some of that more specialized care. So if your student has a very specific need, that's something that you're probably going to want to look at for your own family. But please contact Cougar Health Services if you're wondering if the service that you need is covered there. [CougarHealthServices.wsu.edu](http://CougarHealthServices.wsu.edu), best place to visit to see what is included in that.

But it's right on the edge of campus. So when you're able to come and see us, when you drive up Stadium Way, past that Washington State University sign, it's really that second building on the left.

PHIL WEILER: Yeah. I agree. This is a question, I think, for Michelle. And let me read this. It says many newly admitted students have not actually toured campus in person. How do you suggest they go about choosing a residence hall, since they've not really been able to see any of the buildings in real life?

MICHELLE LEWIS: Yes. Thanks, Phil. That's a great question. And Jill might be able to piggyback off my answer, too, with the residence hall piece of that.

Definitely we recognize that visiting campus is one of the most important factors in choosing a college that's the right fit. And I think I said that in the beginning. And so partially what we've tried to do is create some of those virtual experiences.

We're also hopeful that we're going to be able to phase in some in-person visitation experiences gradually over the summer. And of course, that's going to be dependent on guidance from our governor and what we feel is safe and what the CDC says is safe. In the meantime, housing has some incredible virtual tours where you can go in and look at each residence hall and look at the different thematic things in each residence hall, the layout of the room features.

Those are listed, I know, on the housing websites, but also on the visitation virtual website, we have both the PDF housing brochure that you can download and print, as well as the links to those housing tours online, as well. So I don't know, Jill, if you wanted to jump on that, as well?

JILL CREIGHTON: Sure. Thanks, Michelle. I think that's so important that folks go visit the website, as you mentioned.

But I want to also make sure that folks know that you can preference a residence hall, but you can't choose a residence hall. So you can say I'm most interested in these top five halls for whatever personal reason that you've chosen them. But you're not guaranteed to be placed in any specific space.

So we're going to look at everything from when you applied for that hall to how many other students applied. We always have a couple of halls that are very, very popular. But I do promise

no matter what residence hall that you end up with, you're going to have a tremendous experience.

We have live in staff that are there to help build Cougar community. You have resident assistant and paraprofessional staff who are also there to assist that are typically sophomores and above. That have been there, they've lived in, they've had that experience that you're about to have. And they're great mentors along the way.

PHIL WEILER: Thank you. So this next question that might be either for you, Terese, or for you, Michelle. I'll let you two figure this out.

But a parent is talking about the virtual Alive session, the new student orientation. And their question has to do with registering for classes. If they have to do Alive online, are the students going to be able to get help figuring out what classes they need to register for?

TERESE KING: That's a great question. The students will get help choosing their classes. Through the orientation program, the students will be introduced to a general framework for what classes they're going to begin taking when they're in college.

We're going to be looking at their placement exams or any transfer credit that they have. All of that information is combined into a package and given to an individual academic advisor who is trained in the subject matter, who is prepared to answer questions in the subject or major interest that your student has.

And we also recognize-- I did see some questions earlier-- that students are changing their mind. And we recognize that students often change their major interest. Sometimes students change that from their admissions application into their Alive registration application. Sometimes students change it the night before they go meet with their academic advisor.

And that's just typical. For every Alive session, we have a team of about 80 academic advisors across disciplines that will be working with your students one on one and giving them advice, looking at what previous experiences they're drawing in, looking at their placement exams, looking at what their interests are. We also have professional advisors that work with students who are undecided or trying to decide between two or three different areas.

But they'll be getting assistance from that person. It's an actual appointment through Zoom that they'll have, appointments made. And we'll help facilitate those appointments. So when the students are meeting with the advisor, they will get as much time as they need to get their questions answered. And when they leave that advising session, they will have listed their four or five classes that they will be registering for and then working with an orientation counselor who is a peer leader to help them actually register into those courses.

PHIL WEILER: Terese, you hit one of the questions that I really wanted to ask. So thank you for doing that. That had to do with a question about changing majors-- I know that is a source of great angst for some students.

And let me tell you, it's OK. You don't need to choose the rest of your life today. You have plenty of time to figure out what you like to do. So it is not a problem if a student realizes that they might want to try and explore something different. In fact, that's probably a good thing to do.

So anyway, thank you for hitting that question about changing majors. That's great. Next question I have is-- this is from a parent who lives out of state.

They're wondering, again, about residence halls. And they see that the check in date for residence halls is August 15th. And they're wondering, is that something they should still be planning for?

JILL CREIGHTON: We are working very closely with local and state health officials to look at what safety and social distancing might need to look like in our residence halls for the fall. So at this point, we have not announced final decisions on how best to stagger folks to move in. We're doing a staggered move out right now.

So soon as we have that information, we'll be sure to post that to the housing website and working with our admissions team to make sure that gets out to prospective families. So I know you want to buy plane tickets and make decisions right now. But I want you to know that we are working to make sure that whatever we do announce as final will be the thing that you need to know.

So hang tight with us for a little bit longer. I know you all are very anxious to know where you're going to live. We want to tell you that. But we need to make sure we can do that safely.

PHIL WEILER: So I have another sort of out-of-state question that is a good one to ask here. So there is a parent who is asking about transportation from the airport to the Washington State University campus. How far is that? Is there transportation available? What do students need to do if they are flying in to go to school here at WSU?

MICHELLE LEWIS: I can start with that, and then if somebody wants to jump in. But I will say, number one, it depends on which airport. But we do have a regional airport, the Moscow Pullman airport. And we do now have Uber and Lyft in Pullman. So there is public transportation as well as taxi service from our local airport, which is just a couple miles from campus, if that.

There's also the Wheatland Express that has transportation to and from Spokane daily. And so that is another affordable option that many families take advantage of. And then during holiday times and times where students are frequently transporting or traveling to the West Side, there

are also buses that are scheduled in a very coordinated way to help students get on to the holidays, as well.

PHIL WEILER: Yeah. Thanks, Michelle. I think for me the one take away is, if you do fly into the Moscow Pullman airport, it is literally maybe two, three miles away? It's quite short. And there is always plenty of cabs available.

But the other option that you mentioned, which is a good one for parents to be aware of, is Spokane is a larger airport. And it's about 75 miles away. It's about an hour and a half drive, give or take. So that is certainly an option if you're traveling from a fair distance and it's just a more convenient connection for you. So there are plenty of options either way for transportation.

So another question for students who are coming from maybe outside the immediate area of the Palouse-- this person wants to know are their stores relatively close where we can purchase things like bedding, cold weather clothing? What kind of clothes should parents and students be thinking about for the winter time? I know that that sometimes catches people by surprise. So I don't know, Jill, if you want to start with that.

JILL CREIGHTON: Sure, Phil. We have one big box store in the Pullman area that I won't name, but you can find it on Google pretty easily. And then we're only six or seven miles away from Moscow, Idaho, which is also home to the University of Idaho, which has the same big box store on the other side of the border.

We really encourage folks to come with what you want, because our selection in Pullman is not as robust as you might be used to if you come from a more populated city. We do have package service inside of our residence halls, though, so if you find something that you missed, Amazon does get to us and a number of other online retailers. We want you to have sheets on your first night and things like that. So please come with those, if you're able.

And as I mentioned with the driving, we do get real winter here in Pullman. So if you come from a place that is not familiar with snow or with slush, I'd encourage great boots and a good coat. It can get a little windy and chilly. But our inside buildings are really good with heat and things like that. So you'll be fine once you get indoors. But there are some days when that walk from the south side of campus to the Cub can feel a little bit longer than normal if it's snowing out.

PHIL WEILER: It makes me think of that old saying, there's no bad weather, just inadequate clothing. So yes, we do get snow and ice. Flip flops are typically not a good solution if it's snowing outside.

And we do always see students at first snow thinking they can brave it with flip flops. I do encourage boots. I think that's a great idea.

JILL CREIGHTON: I'll also just add that we get gorgeous springs and summers. It's been lovely. So we are really a four season kind of town. So come prepared for four seasons.

PHIL WEILER: Actually, that's a great point. Actually, that gets back to my earlier question about the box fans. What I see is that when students move in in August, it's typically really warm. And they are worried that they're going to be broiling in their residence halls.

Weather changes quickly by the fall. It's much cooler and much more pleasant. So don't be overly concerned if it's hot when you move in. Because it'll get cooler and more temperate as the year goes by.

BRIAN DIXON: Phil, can I add one thing real quick?

PHIL WEILER: Yeah, please do.

BRIAN DIXON: As a parent of three, that I've sent off to college, it's sometimes helpful to look at in store delivery at some of those big box stores. So if you're trying to figure out sort of carry-ons and packed luggage, having things delivered there and picking it up is sort of a good way to go.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Good advice.

Another question that a parent asked, and I kind of liked this, this person wants to know is there a checklist and a timeline that we can use to make sure we're getting everything done that we need to get done for admissions? Again, as a parent myself who has sent kids to school, I lived in fear that we were missing a deadline and something bad was going to happen. So where should parents and students go if they just want to make sure they've got everything checked off the list for admissions?

MICHELLE LEWIS: Sure. I can start with that. I think everybody probably can add some context to this. But the first place to go would be the Admitted Student website on the Admissions page. And that's just [admitted.wsu.edu](http://admitted.wsu.edu).

And there is a Next Steps Checklist that is very organized and very in sync in the order that you should expect to do things. Every parent that is [INAUDIBLE] tonight is the parent or supporter of an admitted student, so you've already completed many steps to get to that point.

Some of you have students that have already confirmed or accepted their offer of admission to WSU. So that is the first step. And then from there, there are multiple steps to help your student along the way with getting registered for Alive, which is an important step in getting advice and the resources that students need to register for classes and be prepared for fall.

And then of course, applying for housing and some of the things that Jill has been mentioning. And then, of course, in Brian's area, there are some things to do with accepting financial aid.

And all those steps are listed there on that website. But if my colleagues have anything to add, please do.

TERESE KING: I'm just going to pick up on there's a new student checklist also listed on the Alive website, [alive.wsu.edu](http://alive.wsu.edu). And it really takes off of what Michelle was talking about, but focuses on the placement exams.

And one of the things students can be doing now is really kind of preparing for those placement exams, not putting them off, and not taking them on your phone. I know that students like to use their phone. You know, it's hard for me to think about writing an essay on a phone. You know, typing it out that way. But I do know that students are creative and can do those sorts of things.

But taking the placement exams, for the math placement, we want you to do that one to two weeks before you attend your Alive orientation session. But I really encourage you-- I would even put that out a little further and say go ahead and take the ALEKS, which is A-L-E-K-S, ALEKS math placement exam, I would say, two weeks to a month before you attend. Do it when the information is fresh in your mind from the math that you're doing in the high school right now. I think that's going to set you up for success.

The writing placement exam is very different. We're moving into a new format this year. It's something that you will take online as opposed to in-person from past years. And so if you've talked to an upperclassmen, or parents who had already sent a student off to WSU, that writing placement is different.

It is going to be a link. It will be sent to you a week before your orientation program. And it's really going to take you through a Qualtrics survey asking you questions about how you feel about your writing.

It isn't timed. It isn't proctored. You don't have to worry about timing or proctoring.

You have, for both of these exams, 24 hours to take those. And that means you can take a break in between, if you want, and walk away, and then come back and work on it some more. With the writing placement, you'll be writing a small essay and submitting that, and then just talking about how you feel about your writing and where you think you are, where your comfort level is.

So taking those placement exams is really, really important. Again, all of the results of those exams, once taken, will be put in your placement file at the University, your advising file. So that when you meet with that academic advisor during the Alive program, they can pull up your scores and have a conversation about the class that you're going to place into that's going to help you start from a position of strength moving into your math or your writing course.

PHIL WEILER: There's a lot of interest in those placement exams. I'm looking right now at the chat function. So I'm glad you mentioned that. So hopefully folks in the chat are getting some of those direct questions answered, as well.

I also noticed in the chat for YouTube, people looking for real specific answers around COVID-19. What is WSU going to do? If I may, I'll share a little bit of information that I'm aware of. And I'd like other folks to chime in if you'd like, as well.

I think, as some of our panelists have mentioned, we are working very closely with the Governor's office. We're in touch with the Governor's office on a weekly basis, if not a daily basis.

We are working with our other institutions in the state of Washington to try and come up with best practices so that all of the institutions really know what the best approach is to make sure we maintain the health and safety of our students, our faculty, our staff, and our visitors. I can tell you that we have five WSU epidemiologists who are working nonstop at this point, looking at all the various different scenarios that could possibly come into play in the fall. And these are folks who are international experts around infectious disease. And my guess is that work that they're going to be coming up with is going to be a value to other institutions, as well.

I can also say that there is a lot of sharing of information among universities across the country. We are all wanting to make sure that we have the best approach to make sure that we maintain the safety of our students. The fact of the matter is, though, we're still in the process of identifying scenarios, coming up with proposals, and figuring out, and then working with county public health officials, to make sure that the approaches that we take are going to be maximizing everybody's safety.

So it's a little early for us to talk about specifics. I know people want to know about what does physical distancing look like, and how many people will be in a classroom, how many students can be in a residence hall. Those are all issues that we're currently working on. And as soon as we make decisions, we'll share those. But let me stop and just see if there's anyone else who wants to add anything to that line of conversation.

BRIAN DIXON: So this is Brian, again. I think it is along the same sort of line about what's going to happen for the fall and as well as sort of the checklist questions. We get a lot of questions about navigating your finances. When is tuition going to be due? When is financial aid going to get paid out?

And so on our main website-- I can pull this up for you real quick-- you should be able to see here. This is our Navigating Your Finances.

And I know parents find this really helpful. Because there's so much information sometimes, it feels like you're drinking from a fire hydrant, right? There's just so much coming at you all at once.

And so these are expandable for each and every semester. We'll give you specific timelines for when things are going to happen. We also have this visual graphic here that sometimes parents and families think it's helpful to just print out and just know about.

30 days before the start of classes, you will get charged for your tuition, mandatory fees, room and board. So those charges will come up. And you'll be able to go out and make payments.

If you do have financial aid coming in, then financial aid will go and pay against those charges. And that's usually about a week before the start of classes when financial aid pays. And if there are funds left over, then there will be a refund that will get sent out.

So you'll get instructions about setting up for direct deposit. And if you don't set up for direct deposit for that money to go directly into a bank, then a check will get mailed out to you. So just wanted to share that information-- again, lots of great resources here on the financial aid site that you can use.

And again, we're here for you. You can call us, email us, and answer your questions.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. Here's another question. I think this is probably geared toward you, Terese.

Again, as a parent, I can definitely sympathize with this this question. It says what type of academic support will freshmen get in regard to making sure that they have good study habits, that they're keeping up with their schoolwork? Is there an advisor who can help them provide input?

And there are parents noting that for them, this will be the first time that their student is on their own and there will be no parent reminders and parent support. And so the person concludes by saying, obviously, it's up to the student. But they would be interested in finding out what Washington State University can do to help provide some reinforcement and support for the students.

TERESE KING: Yeah. Great question. We have a variety of support systems in place for students as they're transitioning academically from the high school environment to the college environment. And one of that is really having those conversations about the differences between the two environments.

And some of that starts at the Alive program. Students will be given a lot of good information from upperclassmen who serve as orientation counselors to talk about their transition and what worked and what didn't work.

We also have a variety of resources. Every incoming student at Washington State, across all of our campuses, is assigned an academic advisor to the specific student, based on their interest

area, their major. Even our transfer students coming in for the first time will have an academic advisor.

And students are expected to meet with that advisor at least once a semester. But oftentimes, our students will come in and meet two or three times or more, depending on what their needs are. That person is there to guide you, not only academically, in conversations about your career, about your internship interests, but helping you select classes for a future semester, helping you if you're struggling in a class, and giving you some tips on here's some things.

Our professors have office hours that students can go to the professor during the office hours and ask questions if they didn't quite understand the material. Certainly, sending them emails, those sorts of things are all part of the support system that we have.

We have tutor-assisted study tables in some of our living communities and our residence halls, as well as in our Greek community and our chapter houses. We also have free tutoring on campus for students in most lower division courses. And we offer and at times, we know students will take that information. So afternoons and evenings we run tutoring programs, beginning Sunday nights in the residence halls, all the way through Wednesday and Thursday nights, and then in the afternoon. So if a student can't meet with a tutor because they have a class at one time, they can check out another time on campus.

So those are all the sorts of supports that we have for students. And the academic advisors are helping the students in the sense that we get the student's midterm grades. We're connecting with students. And we're reaching out to them and asking them to come in and see us. And so at midterm time, that's a great time to see the advisor and see what other things you can put into place.

We also have workshops throughout the division for academic affairs, as well as student affairs and health services offer workshops. Because sometimes, it's an issue of I'm just not sleeping well. And that's causing me some concentration issues academically.

We've got some great workshops that can help students kind of think about their habits and how to change those habits. Or if they're struggling, ways to connect with other support services that can help them through that.

PHIL WEILER: Yeah. I think, for me, that's a real pro tip, both for students, if they're having issues, or if parents are hearing from their students and their students are struggling in one fashion or another. I'll make the plug again. I think that the Academic Success and Career Center is a great place to go, as well as the Dean of Students.

You will find that if you've got an issue and you ask for help, help is going to be there. We exist to make sure our students get through in four years and earn their degree. And we'll do everything in our power to make sure that that happens.

So all students need to do is ask. And a lot of times, I think that's the hardest part is to say I'm not feeling comfortable asking for help. But please do. We've got people whose job it is to help you to be successful.

This is an interesting question that I want to get to before we run out of time. And there's kind of two different versions of this. A couple parents have asked, you know, should my student come in the fall? Or is it a good idea to take a year off?

I've got another parent here who's asking should they be going to a community college for their first year. Just curious on what are your thoughts-- what do you know about if a student takes a year off, are they able to come back? And is that is that a good transition? What do people have thoughts on that area?

TERESE KING: I can start, just based on some conversations that I've had with current students at WSU who, really, as they transitioned to the online environment, were struggling a bit and trying to figure out, this wasn't really what they originally signed up for is what I would hear a student say. And it's not something that we all anticipated, by any means. But I think as students started getting used to the online environment and the resources that were still available to them online, that transition became a little easier.

In having conversations on, you know, I'm not sure is it going to be like this in the fall, maybe I should take a gap semester, maybe I should go closer to home, those sorts of things-- in having the conversation about taking time off or time away, life takes over, oftentimes. And it can be difficult to then transition back into the environment. And as I've had the conversations with students, I've said so if you were staying home, what would you be doing at home if you weren't going to school?

And they started talking about, well, I'm not really sure I can get my typical job, because that's usually just summer. But we're all socially distancing or physically distancing right now, so I don't have that to turn to. And so we talked about, you know, what they would be doing at home wouldn't look very much different in terms of just-- as this student said to me, I would be bored. And so yeah, maybe I should rethink that and continue on and not lose that time towards my degree of what I can be doing.

JILL CREIGHTON: I'm going to add on to your comments, Terese. I think it's so important that everyone remember that being a Cougar is so much of an entire experience. Being in the classroom is part of it. But in the Division of Student Affairs and across the University, we've been working really hard to figure out what that new Cougar experience looks like, sounds like, feels like. And we're a community.

One of my favorite things about being a part of Washington State University is that there's this intangible familial feel to being a part of it. And so when you choose to be a Cougar, you're a Cougar for life. At this institution, when you wear that logo, somebody will yell go Cougs at you, no

matter where you are in the world. And that's part of that intangible, just joy of this community.

So I think that there are certainly academic reasons, as Terese mentioned, that are beneficial for you to remain with WSU for all four of your undergraduate years. But really think about beyond the classroom, too, and what that means to you as a person, what that means to you as a college student. For some of you with a legacy family, you might have had parents and grandparents who have been part of the Cougar experience.

And if you want to see what some of those other programs and services can look like, on the Division of Student Affairs website, we do have a new Cougar experience tab. And you can check out some of the ways that we're adopting what we do for students. For example, some of our rec instructors are doing a wonderful job of moving their courses to Zoom. But we're also doing that community building for all sorts of different pockets of students who want to continue to be involved, want to continue to be connected. So we are still going to be here for you regardless of whatever the fall might bring.

MICHELLE LEWIS: I know we're running short on time. So I'll add a quick comment to that. And I agree with both of you, Terese and Jill. Thank you for that.

And obviously, we want your students here. We want to welcome them and you onto our campus as Cougs. And I think all of us on this panel feel confident that we're going to be equipped to provide the support and a good experience for your students, regardless of what that looks like. That being said, we understand you have to make decisions that are best for your family.

I will put out there, as well, that WSU has six campuses across the state of Washington. And so we're also working with families who, you know, it might be a better option for them to go to WSU Tri-Cities or WSU Vancouver for their first year or first semester. And we are open to helping your students transition to another campus for a year.

Or any other pathway that is best for your family, we will be there to support you and your student on that path. And we hope that eventually, we hope it's this fall, but we hope that at some point, we'll be able to welcome them anew to our campus.

PHIL WEILER: Thanks, Michelle. You know, I want to echo. As I was listening to the three of you talk, it makes me think about something that President Kirk Schulz talks about a lot when people ask him about why it's so important for him to try and have some sort of a in-person experience in the fall.

And he talks a lot about this idea that there's a lot of education that happens in the classroom. But there's a tremendous amount of value that comes outside the classroom, as well, a lot of learning that happens. You know, those late nights when you're in a residence hall with your roommate, or you meet up with a group of friends to do a study session, and the conversations

that come out of that are really hard to replicate. And so we really want to be able to do everything we can to make that in-person experience be there for our students so that this year can be a great year for all of our new Cougs.

So we are at the top of the hour. I think I'm going to have to stop us there. I want to, first of all, thank our panelists. Thank the four of you for being on with me.

I want to thank all of the folks who are answering the tremendous number of questions that we're getting on the chat. We've got a real yeoman's group of people doing a lot of work there. So thanks to those folks who are moderating the chat function.

But most importantly, I want to say thanks to you, the parents, the supporters, and the students who are looking at Washington State University. As I said, we exist for you. We want you to come here, get a degree in four years, graduate, and be successful in life. And so we're excited to have you join us in the fall.

And as a reminder, if you didn't get all your questions answered, it's not too late. We've got two more of these sessions planned. The next session is going to be on June 4th. And then the final one scheduled for June 25, again from 5 to 6 PM.

I'd encourage you to submit questions, if you have any. And again, please know that we are working to make sure that we have the best and safest experience for students and for all of our Cougs on all of our campuses. So these sessions are recorded, if for some reason you couldn't join us for the entire session today, or you can't jump in on the 4th or the 25th, know that you'll be able to view them. And we'll also have a transcript, in addition to the recording.

So with that, I wish you a great evening. And I wish you all a go, Cougs.