

# WSU COVID-19 Town Hall – September 10

PHIL WEILER: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 10th in our series of systemwide COVID-19 town-hall meetings for Washington State University. Glad you're all able to join us.

My name is Phil Weiler. I'm vice president for marketing and communications, and I'm going to serve as our moderator for the next hour. We have a lot of folks who are joining us this time around on the panel, so I'll go through their names shortly. But first off, I want to thank you and welcome everybody for joining us from across the state and around the country. We know that we always get quite a bit of a-- large number of people who join us for these, so thank you for taking the time.

As we've done in the past, we ask people to submit questions in advance of today's meeting. We had over 100 questions that were submitted already, so that gave us a good sense of the kinds of content we need to cover today.

We also have the chat function working in YouTube, as we've done in the past. We have our system-- excuse me, our subject-matter experts who are monitoring the chat. If you have a question, post it there. We'll try and answer it in real time. Chances are that we'll hopefully get to your questions before you even have a chance to put them in the chat.

So with that, let me go ahead and introduce our panelists today. Of course we're joined by Dr. Elizabeth Chilton, our Provost and Senior Vice President.

Also have Bonnie de Vries, MD. Bonnie is our Medical Director for Cougar Health Services. She's also the Co-Incident Commander for WSU's COVID response.

Curtis Cohen-- Curtis is a student at WSU Pullman. He also is the President of the Associated Students of Washington State University. So, Curtis, thank you. You're the first time we've got a student on this panel. It's something we need to do more of in the future.

Next I want introduce Mary Wack. Mary is Vice Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Achievement.

Next we have Jennifer Ellsworth. Jennifer is the Director of Counseling and Psychology-- or Psychological Services at Cougar Health Services in Pullman.

Next we have Terese King. Terese is the Executive Director of University Advising and the Director of the Academic Success and Career Center.

Next is Dave Cillay. Dave is our Vice President for Academic Outreach and Innovation. He's also the Chancellor for WSU's Global Campus.

We also have Dr. Jill Creighton. I'm looking for her on the screen. There you are. Jill is the Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Campus life.

And, of course, we're joined by Kirk Schulz, President of Washington State University. So thank you all for joining us.

There's a lot of content to get through. I'd like to jump in. I'd like to start, Provost Chilton, if you would have any opening remarks for us.

ELIZABETH CHILTON: Yes, thank you very much, Phil, and thank you everyone for joining us. As Phil said, there were a hundred or so questions sent in in advance by faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and community members. And I really just want to thank you for staying engaged, staying in touch. And I think I speak for everyone on this call. We read every one of your questions, and it has informed our work and our conversation today.

Now, I've been in my position for just eight weeks, having moved to eastern Washington at the end of June and starting my position July 15. And I'm just really proud to be part of the Cougar community because I've seen how everyone has come together, how our faculty, our staff, our students have all been engaged and trying to make the most of this. I am certainly not going to pretend there's any kind of silver lining to a global pandemic because this is not just a dark cloud. This is-- I don't know what-- a tidal wave.

However, what I've seen from the Cougar community is that everyone is reaching out, showing compassion, and trying to be creative in getting the most out of the situation. So you'll hear today we'll talk a little bit about how the semester is going, and I've heard from students who have said they've had to really pivot their thinking about their education or they've gotten something out of their class that they feel they wouldn't have if it had been in person, or faculty are telling me that they're exploring new pedagogies, new ways of learning, new ways to get their students talking and not just listening to lecture.

So I think there are things that we can take away that are positive. And I know that all of us here are certainly trying to make the most out of the situation.

[AUDIO OUT]

PHIL WEILER: --question to Dr. de Vries. There's been quite a bit of media coverage in the last week or so regarding the number of positive coronavirus tests that we've seen here in Pullman. Can you talk a little bit about the steps that WSU has taken to help ramp up testing for students who are living in the Pullman community?

BONNIE DE VRIES: Absolutely. I'd be happy to talk about that. Given the number of COVID-19 cases among our Pullman students right now, our primary goal is to test as many Pullman students as we can. So we've had three testing centers running at various times this month, and Phil's going to share some photos of those now so everyone can see them.

Last week, we were testing students at both Cougar Health Services and also at the Range Health Mobile Medical Clinic, which we'll have some photos coming up in just a moment. This was a partnership between the Pullman and Spokane campuses, and I want to thank the College of Medicine and our Health Sciences Campus for that really helpful resource that they sent our way. You can see it right there.

This week, our leadership made a really important decision to provide testing to all Pullman students free of charge for a period of time. And this is because we want to have the broadest testing possible of our student body without any barriers to accessing testing so that we can get control of this outbreak.

Students don't need to report symptoms or any exposure to COVID to be tested. Given the number of cases we have, I'm just assuming that all students in Pullman have had some level of exposure, and I'm ordering this test for the whole student body in Pullman right now.

So this week, students can access testing at two locations. Cougar Health Services, which is our student health clinic, is testing Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. There's one of our workers right there. And students don't need an appointment for this. They can just walk up. No drive up. Just walk up.

We also have another testing site in town right now. The National Guard is helping out, and they are providing testing at various locations in the WSU neighborhood. For the rest of this week, I expect them to be operating at the Merman-Valley parking lot near the Valley Road Play Fields. They're open Tuesday to Saturday 10:00 to 4:00, so they're giving us a little coverage on the weekend.

And I also just want to thank our Steptoe apartment residents for letting us use your parking lot earlier this week. That was incredibly helpful, and we really appreciate that.

So this week, students can go to either of these locations without an appointment. You don't need to bring your insurance card. There's no fee. We would like to see your CougarCard just so we can confirm your name and your ID. But other than that, just show up when they're open. And I do encourage every Pullman student to come out to one of these sites and be tested.

PHIL WEILER: So thanks, Bonnie. I just want to make sure I caught that. So it's open to all Pullman students. There's no cost to the students. They don't need an appointment. They just need to show up. They should bring their CougarCard with them, and they'll be able to be tested.

BONNIE DE VRIES: Yes. 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday at Cougar Health and 10:00 to 4:00 Tuesday to Saturday with the National Guard.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you.

So you mentioned they don't need to be-- I'm just looking at my notes here. They don't need to be exhibiting symptoms. There is no cost.

What happens if a student tests positive? How do they hear about that? Who contacts them? Who's doing contact tracing-- those kinds of questions.

BONNIE DE VRIES: Those students will get their results in our secure portal, Cougar Health's portal. And they'll get an email telling them their result is ready. For students who test positive, the two most important things that they can do are to take part in a contact-tracing phone call and to stay home and away from others.

WSU's Environmental Health and Safety Department and our local health department are working together to do the contact tracing. So they're calling students who tests positive and having a confidential conversation with them to determine who else might have been exposed to COVID.

So the public-health worker will ask the student who's tested positive, who have you been around in the last 10 days? And the more information that the student can give during this conversation, the more we're able to stop the spread of COVID in our community.

So any student who is tested can already start thinking about this. Where have I been in the last 10 days before my test? so that they can be ready for that conversation.

And remember, anyone that you spend 15 minutes with and are less than six feet apart from is a close contact, and they better be worth having to spend 14 days in quarantine for.

So then in addition to contact tracing, students who test positive also very importantly need to stay home and away from others for a period of time, which we call isolation. So that's going to be at least 10 days, maybe more if you're having symptoms. And remember that not everyone with COVID has symptoms. So this is why testing and contact tracing are so important.

So we have these three things-- testing, contact tracing, isolation. They are all super essential to our ability to stop the spread of COVID and to prevent the really bad outcomes that will happen if we don't do that.

[AUDIO OUT]

PHIL WEILER: --worth spending 10 days in isolation for. Good response.

And you mentioned the contact tracing, and that's being handled by WSU employees who were trained by Whitman County Public Health. Is that correct?

BONNIE DE VRIES: Yes.

PHIL WEILER: Great. OK, perfect. Thank you.

I'd like now maybe to turn it over to Curtis. Curtis, welcome. We're glad to have you here on the panel. This is great.

I know that the WSU student body has launched a campaign called Cougs Cancel COVID. Can you tell us a little bit about what Cougs Cancel COVID is, how it got started, and what your goals are for the campaign?

CURTIS COHEN: Yeah, definitely. Thank you, Phil.

So Cougs Cancel COVID is a campaign to make sure that we're staying safe, we're staying six feet apart, wearing masks, and most importantly, we're avoiding those large social gatherings. And the neat part about it, it's mainly run by students because we all recognize that a lot of us came here back to Pullman because we call this place home. And while many of us came back here, that also creates a bit of a dilemma because a lot of us are congregating in the same environment.

And so what Cougs Cancel COVID really does is make sure that we're all informed of the various social-distancing practices, where to get tested, and most importantly, that every single student can get tested for free, and I strongly encourage every student to get tested.

And I really like the campaign because it's a fun way to really interact with students. I've been walking around campus, and there are a lot of different signs. Some of them are pretty funny. My favorite one is "Don't be a 'cov-idiot.' Wash your hands." And so those messages really resonate with us as students, and those messages are being passed on to all our different organizations here at WSU. And I'm very confident it's going to be successful and achieve our goal and ultimately reduce COVID cases here in Pullman.

[AUDIO OUT]

PHIL WEILER: --safe six as in six feet apart. I thought that was very clever.

Next question I'm going to address to Mary and to Elizabeth if I could. Obviously back in July we made the decision to move from a hybrid model of partial face-to-face instruction and partial virtual instruction. We moved to a full distance-learning environment for fall term.

We're a couple of weeks into the semester now, and I'm just curious, what are you hearing in your roles as our academic leaders? How are things going with that move to virtual learning?

MARY WACK: Well, I'll kick it off. I have heard a lot of optimism and a lot of enthusiasm about what's happening in the classroom. There have been a couple of small bumps along the way on one campus or another, but those are passed, and students are finding that they are really

engaged in the courses in new ways. And the faculty, as Elizabeth said earlier, are really finding new and interesting ways to teach.

Chat is kind of a sleeper hit in this regard. Faculty are very enthusiastic about how this is able to draw students into the chorus. Shy students who never would have spoken up in a large class or, really, in any class are finding that they're engaging with the material through chat.

Faculty are employing chat in all kinds of interesting and creative ways. I heard one wonderful example where the faculty member has a prerecorded lecture. And while the lecture is going on, much like this town hall, the chat is running over to the side, and the faculty member is answering questions in the chat. So he is really in two places at once in that class session, and I think that running commentary from the professor in dialogue with the students about the material of the lecture really gives a richer and deeper engagement than might have happened during class time. So I think there's great things happening out there, and I'm really excited to hear, as the semester develops, the other ways in which faculty are using these kinds of tools.

[AUDIO OUT]

PHIL WEILER: --and Mary just said, and she was talking about one example of how classes are being taught in a virtual format.

And one of the questions that we received in advance was from a parent, and this parent was asking about the nature of distanced learning. What did it look like? This particular parent just didn't really know what to expect. Can you share with us, how do students attend and participate in classes? Are they connecting at a certain time? Is everything prerecorded and they look at it when they get an opportunity? And I think Mary sort of answered the question, but this parent also was concerned about are there opportunities for students to engage in this virtual environment?

ELIZABETH CHILTON: Sure. I'm happy to tell you what I know, and Mary may want to add some details to this.

But we have a requirement based on our accreditation to ensure that there is active engagement between the faculty members and our their students. And even though there may be assignments that they can complete outside of the interaction with the faculty member-- like they might have readings or films to watch on their own time-- there is active engagement either in discussion sections or lab sessions or lectures.

And Mary was talking about some of the discoveries that faculty have made, but one faculty member was so happy because he was able to get the students in breakout rooms, and he could virtually travel among the breakout rooms and participate and listen and help facilitate. But that was a class that normally he couldn't get people really talking because it was a fairly large class. And by breaking them up into smaller groups, getting the students engaged, he was able to see more of that interaction.

So certainly it is not the case where the faculty have prepared online lectures for the whole semester and they sort of hit go and it just sort of plays by itself. There are institutions, and we do offer classes through globe go global-- and Dave I'm sure can say more about this-- where it's asynchronous, meaning that the faculty member and the students aren't there together at exactly the same time in real time. That is not what we're doing on the Pullman campus this semester.

PHIL WEILER: Mary, go ahead. Sorry.

MARY WACK: Yeah, I might just add one sort of humorous, humanizing touch that I've heard that one faculty member has decided to employ. So you know how when we're all on Zoom, various things outside of our control wander through the background, and pets are one of them. And this faculty member had the idea of bring a pet to class day, which you could never do in real life. But, in fact, using Zoom, everybody could introduce their pet and have a little human moment, real-life moment there that broke the ice and soothed people down because they're petting their pets and so on. So I think there's lots of ways that faculty are employing their ingenuity to really make this a memorable experience for students.

PHIL WEILER: I love that. I hadn't heard that. That's a great idea and a great way to make it OK when your pet does decide to pounce on your keyboard while you're talking.

I'd like to turn, I think, the conversation now to Jennifer, if I could. Jennifer, we've talked a lot today-- and I think just sort of in society there's been a lot of discussion about the steps we can take to preserve our physical health during the pandemic, but that's not the only kind of health we need to focus on. There's been a lot of concern around mental health. And so I'm curious, can you share with us some of the services that we have available to students across the entire WSU system to help address mental-health needs?

JENNIFER ELLSWORTH: Yes. We have mental-health professionals working with students on every campus. We've all adapted due to COVID and are now offering telehealth appointments where students can meet with a therapist by Zoom or over the phone.

I know that we're all really, really familiar with Zoom at this point in the pandemic, but it might be a little bit of a new idea in terms of having a counseling appointment. So we really want people to know that telehealth appointments are effective. They're private. And also we're finding that students get used to them really quickly.

There are some additional advantages with the telehealth appointments in terms of accessibility. For example, on the WSU Pullman campus, we found that we were able to continue meeting with more students than ever over the summer because as they left Pullman and went home, they were able to continue accessing those appointments with their counselor.

I can see we've got the slides up with information across the system, which is excellent. As I've talked with the directors of counseling and mental-health professionals across the system, I'm

really impressed with the variety of services that are available. We're all offering the individual counseling, and then each campus has additional resources. There are workshops. There's drop-in services. There are support groups. There are crisis appointments. And each campus has a unique constellation of services available.

So a great way to learn more about what's available on your campus would be to look at the counseling website where you can learn more, and then we also have the slides. If you were interested in sort of jotting down their phone number, by calling those phone numbers, you'll be able to get more information or request services.

I also wanted to highlight that there are resources for our WSU global students at the website on the slide. That includes links to a variety of different mental-health resources. And I'm also always mindful of our international students and our graduate students. You have access to services on the campus that you reside on, but you also have some additional mental-health resources through your student health insurance, and you can learn more about those through the Student Insurance Tab at the Cougar Health Services website. Thanks.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. I'm happy to hear that not only are there services available on all the physical campuses but for the global campus, our online campus. I think that's really critical. So thank you.

Terese, I'd like to ask you a question now. This was one that came in from parents submitted in advance. We received a question from a parent who was concerned about things like tutoring and other kinds of academic support given that we are in this virtual environment, as opposed to face to face. Can you share with us what kind of academic advising, tutoring, and other kinds of resources might be available to students, again, across the entire system and how students should go about accessing those if they need them?

TERESE KING: Yeah, great question. We have a variety of academic resources on all of our campuses, and certainly our academic advisors are one of those front-line resources that we have to offer. And students can either make an appointment with their academic advisor-- they can find the name of that person through their My WSU Student Center-- or they can go to drop-in services that are on a variety of our campuses as well as in colleges or departments on the Pullman campus have a variety of those drop-in services where they don't need an appointment. They just have a quick question or want something addressed.

On all of our campuses, we offer eTutoring. So one of the things that I really like about our tutoring services is that while we have them in a variety of hours across the system, whether it's the Tri-Cities campus or Vancouver campus who has some tutoring in the morning hours as well as afternoon, kind of in that 8:00 to 5:00 day. On the Pullman campus, we have tutoring available in the afternoon from noon until 9:00 at night.

And then the opportunity that we have in this environment right now is if you need tutoring in math, you don't have to just go to your campus tutoring center. You can look across the

services of the entire system because maybe it's more convenient for you to get tutoring at 9 o'clock at night or at 8 o'clock at night with your schedule than it is for you to receive tutoring in the morning.

The other thing that we have really across the system with tutoring too is both the in-service, face to face over Zoom with our students online as well as maybe you just want to drop off a paper, a draft of your writing and have the writing center look at that.

We're putting links in the chat of these services, both for the Pullman campus as well as other services across the system. But again, another great resource. We have supplemental instruction, forming study groups happening online. I know a lot of students can learn better by learning with a group and repeating-- teaching it to each other, learning it from each other. Kind of phrasing it different ways really helps our students.

So we have in all of our centers as well-- again, across the system, we have a variety of workshops that students can access. So maybe they don't want to talk to a tutor directly but they want some time management tips or study-skills tips, and they can do online workshops that have been prerecorded by students or faculty and staff.

So those are just some of the resources that we have to offer. And if students are having difficulty finding those resources on their home campus, they're more than welcome to send us an email to [fallacademicspullman@wsu.edu](mailto:fallacademicspullman@wsu.edu). And while that comes in directly to the Academic Success and Career Center in Pullman, we can help you find those resources on any campus if you're having difficulty.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. That's nice to hear that you're extending those services late into the evening. I think that's a great idea.

I know, Terese, you and I have talked about this on these COVID-19 town halls in the past, but I guess it bears repeating. Students, there are people whose job it is to make sure you're going to be successful academically. Please take advantage of those resources.

Terese and her team do a fantastic job. There are a lot of resources available. The toughest thing for you to do is just to ask for the help. But once you do, I think you're going to be overwhelmed with all the support you get. So please do make sure you take advantage of these great resources and those great staff who are doing all the work.

I'd like it turn now to Dave Cillay if I could. Dave, when I introduced you, I mentioned that you're the chancellor of our global campus. That's our online campus, and I think that gives you somewhat of a unique perspective. All of your students are 100% online all the time.

So with that in mind, given the fact that those students who had been in a face-to-face environment previously and had to move to distance learning, I'm wondering if you have any

advice to students on how they can make the most out of being in this distance-learning situation.

DAVID CILLAY: Sure. Thanks for the question, Phil.

So I guess the first thing I would offer is to be active and be involved. You want to engage with your faculty member as well as fellow students. If you have questions, ask. If you have ideas or thoughts on a topic, share them. If you grasp a difficult concept-- kind of building off what Terese says-- that's challenging to others in the class, step up and help your fellow students.

In other words, be engaged. Be connected. Connect with faculty and students. Don't be isolated. That's the first.

The second is kind of a basic one. It sounds kind of simple when I say it, but it really has been the downfall of many students who don't create a schedule that they try to stick to each week. It's easy to procrastinate in an online or a distance environment, so you want to create that schedule.

And it may vary each week, but create a schedule for the week that you know that at this period of time on each day, you're going to designate that time for your coursework. And again, try not to procrastinate. It's easy to put things off, but you want to stick to that schedule.

The third thing that we hear from our global students but we also have heard from our campus-based students last spring is you really want to find or create a place or space that is yours that's free of distractions. Parents can be distractions. Social media can be a distraction. Your phone can be a distraction. You want to isolate those things so that all you're doing is focusing on your coursework. Just create that space, find that place, and make it yours.

The last thing I would offer, you want to prepare for the unexpected. Your internet goes down. Electricity fails. Your computer fails. You have another family member that has an emergency that needs to use a computer at that time.

Try and create a backup plan. If there's work that you can do on offline, have that work identified each week as you're moving forward so that if that hiccup does happen, you've got something that you can do to keep moving forward in that course. If an assignment is due at midnight in Blackboard on Tuesday, try not to plan to submit it at 11:00 PM on Tuesday. Work ahead. Work as quickly as you can so you give yourself a buffer not if, when complications arise.

So I would offer that, Phil, as ways to think about how to be successful in an online and distance environment.

PHIL WEILER: Next, Dave. That's great advice. I appreciate that.

I would like maybe to direct this next question to Jill if I could. And, Jill, I was just taking a look at the chat feature, and people are thanking you for your background supporting the Whitman County first responders. The entire West Coast from California to Washington is unfortunately on fire, and I know a lot of people are being directly impacted by those fires. So I appreciate you putting that background up and giving a nod to those folks who are helping keep us all safe.

Jill, I have a question for you. I understand that we're going to have our first WSU Family Weekend taking place in October, and it's going to be a virtual event. I'm wondering, have we had any other registered student organizations or other kind of student-affairs events that have gone virtual this semester? And what do they look like, and what can we look forward to through the rest of the semester?

JILL CREIGHTON: Hi, Cougs. How are you doing today? I have a lot of information to share on how students can stay engaged. I'm hearing especially from our students that are not in Pullman, how do I stay connected to the community?

So I have a couple of updates for you, and I'm going to ask our wonderful AOI team to throw up the slide for me. All right.

So first if you are a first-time first-year student, we do have a Cougar welcome packet on the way to you. It should be to your home, your permanent address on file with us by the end of September. So keep an eye on your mailbox for that. There's a small piece of Cougar swag in there for you, and we're excited for you to have that.

We have a couple of really important things coming up, including a public square on environmental justice which will be virtual. And you can register for that on GivePulse if you are a student, faculty, or staff, but you're also welcome to attend if you're a visitor.

And our Center for Civic Engagement is also doing some tremendous work in partnership with Whitman County and the county clerk's office to help us get students engaged for the election that's coming up in what is now under 60 days.

Most importantly, if you are physically in Pullman and maybe you're one of our essential workers that comes to campus every day or a student that has an on-campus job in UREC or something like that, we are going to have an official ballot box outside the Chinook Student Center. So you can drop your ballot there, which is a great option for the WSU community.

Our Center for Student Involvement has some great things coming up. The Pacific Northwest Leadership Conference will happen on Saturday, September 26. And if you are a student who has said I've heard all about these virtual student organizations but I have no idea what's happening with them, now is your chance to come meet a bunch of other student organizations.

We have our Virtual Student Org Fair on Monday, September 21, and Tuesday, September 22. We have Curtis on our town hall today, and Curtis, again, is our ASWSU president for the Pullman campus. And a lot of committees in his area along with our GPSA, which is our Graduate Student and Professional Association, have their senates reconvening as well as their student committees, and a lot of those are open to general membership and application. So if you're looking for a way to get involved as a student, especially if you're not physically near a campus, this is a great way for you to do that.

Our Access Center, which is our center that serves students with disabilities, has designed an incredible intersectionality speaker series that will happen all of fall. There are online opportunities to learn about intersectionality from the speaker's perspective, and the first one is coming up next week on the 16th. And that speaker is a comedian who also lives with a disability. And we have some coming up with racial justice and that intersection with disability, et cetera.

So please check out all of that information on the Access Center. And our wonderful chat moderators have some links to drop for you on that.

I do want to give a huge shoutout to the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture who helped to promote team mentorship with Multicultural Student Services, which helps our students from specific underrepresented backgrounds connect with mentors in the STEM area. And that was highly successful this fall, and that will continue through the rest of the semester.

There's also a weekly newsletter starting from Multicultural Student Services. And so if you're interested in that, please continue to check out their social media. That's where that will be posted.

And as you mentioned, Phil, fall virtual family weekend will start October 9 and run the weekend of the 11th. And then we have our spring date as well, which is the 9th through 11th.

So we announce the transition away from Dad and Mom's Weekend to family weekend just a couple of days ago. We're excited to be far more inclusive as a WSU community and recognize all of the different ways that families take shape in 2020.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you, Jill.

I'm going to send the next question to you and I think to Bonnie as well. I'm looking at the chat here, and there's a lot of folks who are interested in any advice we might have on how we can prevent the community spread of COVID-19 because, again, we've seen a lot of people who are of that college age group who are testing positive. So we'd love to hear from the two of you, advice you might have on what students should be doing to make sure they're preventing the spread amongst themselves.

JILL CREIGHTON: | think the first thing to remember is that the guidance has not changed. Since the beginning of the pandemic, it's been the same, and that message has stayed the same. We need you to wear your mask. We need you to physically distance, which is six feet or more. We need you to gather in small groups only using physical distancing and masking.

So right now, it's different in every county where we have a WSU location, so please check with your county for whether that number is 1, 5, 10, et cetera. And if you are coming to a WSU physical location anywhere in the system, we need you to self-test. We are requiring masks in all of our facilities within the WSU campus.

And I know a lot of our students have chosen to live off campus, and so I just want to remind our students that we all have a personal stake and responsibility in making the right choices for our entire community. And so if you see someone who's not wearing a mask, you could just gently ask them to put their mask on. We're not asking you to get into a giant confrontation with someone or to cause an argument, but in the same way that if you saw someone smoking indoors you might approach them and say, hey, you're not supposed to smoke in here, you can do that same messaging with the mask. Doesn't have to be a big thing.

But I am one dean of students. There are like 25,000 of you. I simply cannot be in every single place at every single moment. That's just not practical or possible. And so it's on all of us to do this together, and that's why we have Cougs Cancel COVID.

I want to make sure that you all know that Cougs Cancel COVID is not just a set of slogans. It is a campaign that's rooted in public-health science. We looked at what works when we're looking at public-health messaging for general larger communities.

We also looked at what doesn't work, and what doesn't work is blame and shame. And I think that's a lot of our first reactions. What also doesn't work is telling people what not to do.

What does work is encouraging folks to do the right thing. And so, again, the things that we need you to do, again, has not changed since the very beginning. Wear your mask, wash your hands, stay six feet apart, and self-test if you're coming to a WSU campus. It really is that simple.

And then also Bonnie will be able to share more about this, but we do have our flu-shot clinic coming back in just a couple of weeks here on the Pullman campus specifically. And if you are a person who does carry insurance, most local pharmacies will accept your insurance to get a flu shot as well. So with the COVID and the flu season about to come up coinciding, we want to do everything we can to keep our communities healthy and safe.

But again, we need you to do your part. This is not a situation in which the university is monolith. I think that there is a lot of messaging that asks us to be one, and we are just not in all of the spaces you are in. So if you are a student that has a peer who says I'm going to throw a gathering, be that Cougar that says don't be a "cov-idiot" and don't throw that party.

If you are a Cougar who sees your friends who are not wearing a mask, tell them to put a mask on. If you see students that are in clumps and they're your friends, ask them to declump. And be very careful with the students that you choose to be in your small friend group. I know that a lot of you have housemates and you're living in houses of four, five, or six people. You could choose to be a little COVID cohort and be the one squad that you hang out with this fall.

I know that it's hard. I know that's something that a lot of you are working really hard to do. I especially want to thank our student leaders that have been trying so hard to hold your peers accountable. We see you. We know you're doing it, but we need it to be something that every Cougar does.

And so, again, that Cougs Cancel COVID campaign, those assets are available to the entire WSU community. We have increased testing. We are starting flu shots. But we can't do it without you.

BONNIE DE VRIES: I can only second what Jill said, if I may. The ways that we prevent the spread of COVID are actually simple. And the good part about that is we don't necessarily have to be afraid. All of these simple things are things that we can do to keep ourselves safe and the people around us safe.

The students who have contracted COVID are doing so because of the behavior that they've chosen. And so if you want to help us stop that, you can make these simple choices to wear a mask, to avoid large groups, to stay six feet apart from others, to not share food and other things that people can spread germs through.

And I guess from my perspective, I feel like our students have so much power. This isn't about shame. This isn't about guilt but really recognizing the power that our student body has right now. And I have a tremendous amount of faith in our students to really want to use that power to impact their community and their fellow students in a positive way.

If we choose to not socially distance and not wear masks and not practice good hygiene and avoid spreading germs, then some really bad things are probably going to happen. Typically in communities like ours, an outbreak starts really small, and then within a couple of weeks we see it going to others in the community, people who maybe are not so able to recover from it so easily. And then within a week or two, we start to see the hospital fill up, and then within a week or two we start to see people die, and that is what can happen.

But if our students and all of us choose to practice these few simple things, that doesn't have to happen. We can totally turn this around right now, and we can keep ourselves and other people safe. So these super-simple things of wearing a mask when you're around others, avoiding large groups, staying six feet apart from people who you're not living with, who aren't already your close contacts and avoiding spreading germs is super, super important.

JILL CREIGHTON: I'll also throw in one more thing here which is if you become aware of a situation that you want us to know about, we are using the student-conduct process to address repeated reckless or endangering behaviors through the student-conduct process when it does involve students. Again, that's repeated, reckless, and endangering. And so I'm going to ask our chat mods to go ahead and drop a link to the Center for Community Standards page in the YouTube chat so you can let us know, but we do need to know some identifying information in order to do something about it.

So if we get a report that says I saw 15 people having a gathering somewhere on College Hill, we really can't do much with that. But if you let us know little more specifics, we can help address that situation. So that is available to the WSU community as well.

PHIL WEILER: I actually want to pick up something, Jill, you mentioned that I think is worth exploring a little bit more. We do know that there are some students who are not following the guidance from the governor, but we know that there are a lot of students who are. And I guess, Curtis, I'd love to hear from you with your perspective as the president of the Associated Students of WSU on the Pullman campus. I know you and your other student leaders are working hard to get this message out and to make sure that students are doing the right thing. I'd love to hear if you have any thoughts to add to this question.

CURTIS COHEN: Yeah, definitely. I'd say the majority of students here want to be back here in spring and are following the social-distancing guidelines. They're wearing masks. It's that small percentage that causes that problem.

And so from a student perspective, a lot of influence comes from our fellow peers because we are an organization-based community. And so as student-body president, we are forming a committee with leaders of every organization here on campus, especially those in the residential Greek houses. And we are holding each other accountable to make this platform a way where we can discuss how we can approach this and reduce the spread of COVID.

A lot of our mission is to be delivering things through social media in engaging ways. And so ultimately when we try to do this, we want to look at it from a peer-to-peer perspective and realize that students follow other students. And if we have those leaders setting that example, that water flows down to the entire student body.

PHIL WEILER: Good. Well stated. Thanks, Curtis.

Elizabeth, I have a question for you. This was probably the number-one question that we received in the presubmitted questions, and that was when will we know what spring semester is going to look like? Will we be in person, or will this be a virtual experience in spring semester?

ELIZABETH CHILTON: Yes, I think that's the question certainly on all of our minds, and certainly the leadership, the faculty discuss this every day.

So first of all, I will say that I cannot myself imagine a scenario where the spring semester is 100% in-person, all activities just like they were a year ago. Just looking at how this pandemic is persisting, I find that scenario unlikely. That's my personal opinion, and I'm not an epidemiologist, but certainly I think most of us at the university realize that there will need to continue to be some remote activities and likely some remote teaching.

And so what we're working on is our course schedule to decide what the percentage of remote versus in-person, both classes and activities, will be. And my major responsibility is the course schedule. That's what we're really focused on over the next month to six weeks.

So having said that, we had already planned for a spring schedule and a full suite of classes, and that will continue. Students will have access to all the classes they need for graduation. They will have the same suite of classes available to them at all of our campuses that they would no matter what.

We have decided that by mid-October we will make a call for the Pullman campus-- and I imagine we will coordinate this with the other physical campuses as well-- to make a decision about what portion of our courses will be offered remotely and what portion will be offered in person. As you all know, there are some classes that are being offered in person this semester. It was done through a careful exception process, but there are a suite of courses that right now - and activities-- that are being held in person with social distancing, with appropriate PPE.

So in mid-October, we will release the course schedule, and it will indicate whether a course will be offered remotely or in person or in some hybrid fashion. That will give students plenty of time to work with their advisors to make decisions about their course schedule. It will also give us time to work out other aspects, including housing and other student-support services. And it will give students plenty of time to make decisions about whether they will come back to a particular campus.

I know one of the questions that I am often asked is, well, what are the factors that you're all considering when you're making this decision about will you be primarily remote or will you be majority in person? Certainly the health and safety of our students, our faculty, our staff, and our communities that we're located in, that is first and foremost. And so we're very carefully watching the statistics on the spread of the pandemic.

We're working assiduously on our comprehensive testing, contact tracing, and attestation because that's going to be a critical piece as we look to hopefully open our doors more than they are this semester. That's going to be a critical piece.

And then, of course, with student housing, with welcoming students back in the spring, we want to make sure that we're planning that in a way that allows for whatever appropriate level of social distancing is still required at that time. So it takes a lot of careful planning, but those are the factors that will go into it, and we're aiming for mid-October to announce the course

schedule itself so that students will know whether their course will be remote, in person, or hybrid.

PHIL WEILER: Great. Thank you. It's good to have a date. So we will look to mid-October to get that information. Thank you.

We're getting close to the end of the hour, and I want to make sure we have plenty of time for President Schulz to provide some wrap-up comments. But, Bonnie, before we go, I do have a couple more questions for you.

We have had, by my count, I think 950 students tested in the last week. How many students do we want to test, and is once enough?

BONNIE DE VRIES: So the easy answer, the simple answer is as many as we can. We need to test as many students on the Pullman campus as we can right now. And the sooner we can do that, the sooner we get those testing numbers up, the better the data will be and the more easy-- easily-- the easier it will be to tell what's coming next and how to prepare for that.

And in terms of retesting, I would say at this point every student should just be tested once. And then if that student has concerns because they have symptoms or the test was indeterminate or some other reason, they should reach out to Cougar Health and speak to a health-care provider and determine what their follow-up testing ought to be. But I would love to see every student in Pullman be tested once.

PHIL WEILER: Yeah, I'll echo that. Every student in Pullman should be tested in the month of September. So if you haven't had your test yet, there are at least two opportunities, two locations. It's free. Just need to bring your CougarCard. Please take advantage of those. It's really critical that we get everybody tested, all the students in Pullman, this month. So thank you with that.

I've got one last question for you, Bonnie, before I turn it over to President Schulz. I've been hearing a lot about the importance of people getting the flu vaccine this season. Why is it so critical this year, and when should we start talking to our health-care providers about where and when we can get those flu shots?

BONNIE DE VRIES: Sure. That is a really important topic. Getting a flu shot this year is more important than ever for a few different reasons.

First of all, every respiratory illness, every stuffy nose, every little cough is going to be treated like COVID. And so even if you get a mild flu, you're still going to be treated like a COVID patient and have to isolate until you're better. So let's not catch the flu just so we can avoid that.

Also, people can have COVID and other infections at the same time. And so to get COVID and the flu at the same time would be a very bad combination for anyone, and we really want to avoid that.

And also every year whenever we get an immunization or a flu shot, we are not just protecting ourselves but we're protecting those other members of our community who are much more vulnerable.

And so many primary-care offices and those major chain pharmacies already have flu shots. And so people can just be calling their primary-care office and trying to schedule that now. At Cougar Health here on the Pullman campus, we do have flu shots, and we are scheduling students for that. But the best way to get your flu shot is through our Flu Shot Friday outreaches which start September 25, and we're running them longer this year until November 6. So that's a walk-in opportunity for lots of people to come get a flu shot, and there's lots more information online about that.

PHIL WEILER: Great. So it's not too early for us to reach out to our health-care providers and arrange to get that flu shot.

BONNIE DE VRIES: Yes.

PHIL WEILER: Good. All right, President Schulz, we're almost at the top of the hour, and I want to make sure that you have an opportunity to share your thoughts before we close out.

KIRK SCHULZ: Well, great, Phil. Thank you. And once again, thank you to everybody who's joining us today on this chat.

A couple things I just want to remind everybody moving forward, and I know you've heard this from lots of people before, but I'm going to remind everybody again. For all of our students, please, please go and get that COVID-19 test. The university is picking up all the costs for that. As Dr. de Vries mentioned, you don't have to have lots of other information with you. We're trying to make it super easy to walk up, drive up. Bring that CougarCard. Get that test. We want to make this as easy as possible, and we really need you to get up there and do that.

Second, I just want to thank our students, our faculty, staff, and members of our community that are abiding by all those guidelines. They're socially distancing, wearing masks. They're doing a great job.

And sometimes in the middle of these types of things, we want to focus completely on the few folks that aren't doing what we would like as opposed to again thanking the majority of our students and community members that are just doing a fantastic job. And I think Bonnie and Jill and others on this call have really suggested you don't have to be a jerk about it, but if you see somebody not wearing a mask or people maybe a little too close together, it doesn't hurt to maybe say something in really a gentle, nice way but to say something nonetheless.

I've continued to hear from faculty and staff and community members who are angry about the amount of COVID spreading through our community, that this is easy. Bring the hammer down. Expel students immediately. Why are we messing around with education and things like that? That will not work.

I want to reiterate that we're trying to walk a fine line here. We started a couple of weeks ago with our police just doing an education, walking up to any particular groups, breaking them up, and saying, hey, this is the right thing to do.

That didn't work as well as we wanted to, and so what happened is they began issuing citations to the people hosting the events. Chief Jenkins let us know today that the Pullman police will be approaching the city council asking for an expansion of that ordinance. So in the future if there are events like that, it will not just be a citation to the person hosting. There will be citations to everybody that's attending.

We're not pleased to have to move in that direction, but we've got to do everything we can through education, through communication to ensure that we're just doing the right thing by our community.

Finally, I want to emphasize there's no playbook. If you look at just about every major public university in the country, they're all having COVID-19 outbreaks, and they're almost all exclusively not on on-campus bubble but off campus. And what's happening is people are trying different things.

And so just because university X tried something that worked great in the Midwest or on the East Coast doesn't necessarily mean it's always going to work where we are.

We're going to continue to share back and forth between other institutions and what works and what doesn't, and we will continue to pivot. But we're doing the best we can with the information that we can. And as I told somebody today, boy, if we could go back in a time machine six or eight weeks and know what we know now, were there some things we'd do differently? Absolutely. But we've tried to pivot and move and be flexible moving forward.

So I know people are upset about it in our community, and that's faculty, staff, and students. We're doing the best we can, and we're going to continue to work really, really hard to bring this under control.

I will also remind our community, let's just say we bring those acceptance rates down and those tests, the yes rates down. It doesn't stop then. This is all semester. We're going to have to be diligent about our behavior and the way we get together.

And sometimes people can focus, boy, if we just get them down now, that'll be great. We can't reassume those behaviors that put us in that place. So this is a longer-term, full-semester type of initiative that we're doing, and we really need everybody's help to make it successful.

So we're going to continue to communicate with the community locally, statewide. We're going to continue to use public-health best practices. We're going to continue to communicate regularly. But we need people to be tested. We need people to have confidence in us and send us their suggestions as they have them.

So, Phil, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. Thanks to all my colleagues. They're working really hard to do the best job that we can. Thanks to our students who are really setting a great example out there. We just got to get some of our other colleagues on board.

PHIL WEILER: Great. And I guess I want to echo something you just said, Kirk. I want to thank the 950 students in the last week who did take the time to get those tests done. They are very quick. They're very easy. As the president mentioned, we want to make them as easy as possible. We want to remove as many barriers as there are to getting people to stop and take a few minutes to get that test.

We specifically set up the Range Health mobile unit last week on College Hill because we knew there were a lot of students who are in rental houses or living in that general area. When we worked with the National Guard, we specifically asked them to move to the Merman area where we have a lot of apartments that cater to students. So again, it's very quick. It's very convenient.

So students, we want everyone of you to get tested if you're in Pullman in the month of September, so please do everything you can to make that happen. That will be very helpful.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this was our 10th COVID-19 town hall. Our 11th is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30th, at 11:00 AM. We encourage you to join us.

This one is going to focus primarily on faculty and staff, and we want to take a look at some of the work/life balance issues that faculty and staff members are having to deal with, things like caring for young children while working full time or teaching school-aged children while you're working full time.

For faculty members, particularly those faculty members who are trying to achieve tenure, they're trying to balance all of that with all the research that they need to do. So they have research obligations on top of family obligations. So we want to talk a little bit about that.

We also want to look at the work that's being done in the research arena at WSU. We're a top-flight research university. There's work that's being done addressing COVID-19 as well as a plethora of other problems that we're trying to focus on as a research institution, so I want to talk a little bit about those.

So again, that's Wednesday, September 30, at 11:00 AM. Stay tuned. We hope you can join us.

So with that, I want to thank our panelists. We had a big group today. There was a lot of important information. I really appreciate you all taking the time to join us and share what you had to say.

I want to thank the subject-matter experts who have been on the chat function. They have been working hard to try and get answers to questions and popping in links to resources and the like. So thank you to our subject-matter experts.

And then finally, I want to thank all of you for joining us once again. I find these to be a really valuable opportunity for us to hear directly from students, faculty, staff members, parents, and the community, and we want to continue these and be able to keep this dialogue open.

So thank you for joining us. Enjoy your day. And go Cougs.