

WSU Pullman Student Town Hall – November 5

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Fight, fight, fight for Washington State. Win the victory. We're going to win the day for crimson and gray. Best in the West. We know you'll all do your best. On, on, on. Fight to the end. Honor and glory you must win. So fight, fight, fight for Washington State and victory.

W A S H I N G T O N . S T A T E . C O U G S . Go Cougs!

MARY JO GONZALES: Well, hey. Howdy, Cougs. It is so good to be here with you tonight. I don't know about you, but I needed that Cougar fight song after a long day on Zoom. What I will tell you more than anything is that I miss singing the fight song with all of you, and especially yelling "go Cougs" as I'm walking around the Compton Union, the Chinook, anywhere on campus, especially when we're wearing those wonderful logos.

And so I am so excited to be here with all of my colleagues today to talk with you about the programs that we have available. I know though, however, you have been missing my lamp. I've heard it repeatedly. So I'm actually here with my lamp.

My name is Mary Jo Gonzales, and I'm the Vice President of Student Affairs and a proud Cougar alum. Students, because I also want to invite all of your loved ones-- family, friends, colleagues who are joining us today to have some fun with you all-- we're really excited to talk about what we're going to do in spring 2021. We want you to be here. I also want you to remember, we have some expectations for you being here, just as the fight song reminded us that we have to fight, fight, fight for Washington State, which means we also have to fight, fight, fight for each other as Cougs.

I'd like to introduce you really briefly to all of the folks that will be talking with us tonight. First of all we have Jenni Dalton, who is an RN with Cougar Health Services. Hey, Jenni. How you doing? Then we have Dr. Leyen Vu, who is our doctor, one of our doctors in Cougar Health Services. Hey, Leyen. How you doing?

Then we have Brandon Brackett. You can also call him Blues, because that's what he goes by. He is our Director of Residential Communities here at Washington State. Hey, Brandon. And then we have Arturo Gavilanes. He is the one that's sitting in front of all of that fit exercises, is going to talk to us a little bit about what's going on here for programming.

We also have Sean Greene, who is our Associate Vice President in Student Affairs, who's going to talk a lot about what we're doing related to cleaning and all the things that you can rely upon here at WSU for your safety and security. Sylvia Bullock, who works in our equity and inclusion area, is going to talk a little bit about student programming.

Then we have Jill Creighton. Jill is our Dean of Students and our Associate Vice President of Student Affairs. I think you've seen her, too, on many of our town halls. And then, finally, Karen Metzner, who is our Director of Community Standard. Hey, Karen.

So we are really here for you today. And we want to make sure that we know what your questions are. We did get some that we received prior to having this session. But please know, that's what the YouTube chat function is for-- any of those questions that come up. They have moderators who will be able to answer some of those questions for you. I will ask you to be kind to them. They are working really, really hard to make sure that your experience is amazing and fun this fall.

So we're just going to actually jump right in. So first of all, we've made the decision to open up more housing. Y'all have seen the email. You know that you're going to be a part of that. I do want to talk first, though, about public health and the importance that we've placed on that in our decision making. We are going to be doing mandatory arrival testing and mandatory ongoing screening testing. And so I'd like Dr. Vu and Jenni to talk a little bit about what's been going on in the health clinic. What's the health care side? Jenni, I'm curious to see if anybody else has complained when that stick goes up the nose and goes around to find out about COVID testing. So Jenni and Leyen, I'll hand it off to you two.

JENNI DALTON: Thanks, Mary Jo. And hi, Cougs. Thanks for having us here today. So, yeah, at Cougar Health Services we have been doing all sorts of things. Still continuing with all of the services that we've had prior to COVID, but also done a lot of transitioning. So we're seeing students via telehealth. We've stood up a COVID testing center, as Mary Jo's referencing.

And so for those of you who haven't been able to visit our center, we are not doing the full "brain probe" all the way up your nostril. It is a self swab. It makes you sneeze. It makes your eyes water. It's a 15-second swab up each nostril. And that is the way we get your COVID test results. So that's what you'll get to experience when we do that mandatory testing when you come in. We have a respiratory care clinic. So for any of our students who have COVID, we have negative pressure rooms that we're seeing students in, making it safer for the students and making it safer for the staff to help support you in any way that we need to.

So we also have our vision clinic, our pharmacy. Everybody is still continuing to provide services. Pharmacy-- you can call them. They'll meet you out at your car. And vision clinic is just busting their tails making everything as user friendly as possible. Obviously, those are high touch spots. So they have a great way to disinfect all the frames and are still working really hard for students to be able to select frames and have as much of a normal experience as we possibly can.

And then we just have our wonderful counseling and psychological services department, who is offering telemental health consults and things like that. We do have people in the office for a crisis, as well. So our services continue to be what they have been, but yet also modifying them to make it as safe as possible for everybody else.

LEYEN VU: Thank you, Jenni. My name is Dr. Leyen Vu. And Jenni gave a great overview of all the services that Cougar Health Services offers to students. I also wanted to touch base real quickly on Mary Jo's comment about mandatory arrival testing. I think that this is a really good program, especially from the public health standpoint. When students come here, we want to know about the percent positivity rate of COVID, or how much COVID exists in our-- on our campus at that time.

And so I think it's-- one of the big points is that we deliver care between pa-- between provider- health care provider and patients, but we also look at it from a population base, as well, in the public health sense. And so the rival testing is mainly for surveillance, to see how much COVID exists on our campus, and so that we can make really good public health decisions and infection control decisions afterwards and so we can be really nimble with how we're treating our students, but at the same time looking at our community and Pullman at large, and even in Whitman County.

MARY JO GONZALES: Yes, Leyen. Can I ask you a follow-up question that? One of the questions-

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LEYEN VU: Sure.

MARY JO GONZALES: --that came up-- a parent-- family member and student wanted to know is, so, hey, I test positive. What kind of health care am I going to receive from Cougar Health Services if I'm testing-- if I tested positive?

LEYEN VU: So what we're really lucky here in our university as-- is that generally, our student population is between the ages of 17 or 18 to about 25. So we're really healthy. And so what we've known about COVID throughout these last 10, 11 months that it's been here, is that young people do pretty well. So if they're-- if students are doing pretty well from a medical standpoint, they can isolate in their own homes or dorms, or just by themselves.

If they need further care we are open to see them via either telehealth or even in person. We have a respiratory care center right now for this purpose. And so we can get-- and even to deliver care to anything that they need. If they need any specific medicines, if they need further tests, even if they need to be seen at the hospital, we can help direct that there.

MARY JO GONZALES: Yeah. So that follow up's been really important, I know, to many of our Cougar community. And that's, again, something we're working-- I want you all to know out there that we are working with our local health department, our environmental health and safety on the Pullman campus. And there really is this comprehensive effort to take care of our students in the community.

Another question that came up, Sean-- and this one's for you. What are we doing in terms of cleaning and taking care of facilities and managing some of those things that the CDC and the state is requiring us-- requiring of us for cleaning?

SEAN GREENE: All of our halls have dedicated custodians that are part of our housing staff. And then our custodians are not only cleaning restrooms on a daily basis but are also hitting high-touch points. We have all of our HVAC system set to non-recircled air. So what that means is we're using fresh air all the time. We're getting about four cycles per hour, which means the whole building is being recycled with fresh air four times for every hour.

We are also making sure-- not only is we're doing the high touch counts, is there's been some questions in the chat talking about where-- what resident hall can live in and why? And there's been some questions of, why can't I pick a hall? When we assign individuals we're also doing it-- one of the things that we're spending a lot of time on is our bathroom count, making sure that we have the right facilities for everyone and that we're not overusing each restroom. So we're paying attention to those counts, as well. But we will, again, have daily sanitation. We have all of the disinfectants that the CDC req-- has recommended and are available to our custodians to deal with cleanup of all of our facilities.

MARY JO GONZALES: And so Sean, how many-- the other question that came up was, how many of the facilities, or how many spaces do we actually have for quarantine and isolation for students should we need that? And what has the university been using to guide its decision making?

SEAN GREENE: We've been looking at our peers and talking to them in terms of, what is the appropriate bed count, or how many spaces should we have available? We have roughly 25% of our housing set aside for isolation and quarantine spaces. Those spaces are also-- we've made sure that we have-- don't have any shared HVAC with any other facilities. Again, the facilities themselves will use fresh air that whole time. So we have held back those spaces so that if students do need to isolate or quarantine, that we can move them to a safe space. And even in those spaces, we-- that usually is private or semi-private bathrooms at that time. And again, paying attention of the areas of where they-- those individuals would be located.

MARY JO GONZALES: Exactly. And with new governor's orders around what we can or cannot do with residential facilities, I'm going to move now to Brandon. Brandon, I know that the governor has issued new guidelines around how many rooms we can-- how many people can be in a room, how many room spaces we should utilize or how many-- like, if I want to have some of my friends over, what I can do. Can you talk a little bit about what you're doing around community building? And what are going to be some of our expectations in our residential facilities? And I'm only asking because I was also a [? McCarran ?] resident at one time, and a [? Rogers ?] resident while I was here. So Brandon, what are you thinking? What's going on for spring?

BRANDON BRACKETT: First off, thanks for having me. This is my first town hall. I really-- I want to do it right, though. And I paid attention to all the other town halls. And I know the background is important. So I'll just do that, turn that on. And it's very-- it's tall. And so your move, Mary Jo.

Anyway, so let's talk about community. The number one goal of a residence life department, or at least our residence life department, is to plug students into the greater Cougar community. It's an awesome community. I've been a member for 20 years, and I'm lucky to be-- and then also to develop some agency and ownership over that community. And so there's a variety ways we do that. And the goals stay the same, just the delivery changes, I think, during this pandemic.

One of the foundations of building community in the residence halls is the live-in staff. So there are still resident advisors living in the residence halls. There are assistant hall directors. There are resident technology assistants. And then there are residential education directors who are master professionals, live in the halls and oversee them.

And their challenges here has been really reaching out, intensifying intentional interaction-- so increasing one-on-one interactions via Zoom, creating smaller programs. We put on over 160 programs this fall. 100 of them were virtual. 50 were in-person or mixed. And there's different rules depending on what type event it is and such.

But for the most part, our in-person programs have been about 10 or under. And then the governor's proclamation changed it to five or under. So that means we would try to recreate the experience in multiple areas in those smaller groups. So you can still participate. You can still experience the community. And you can still get to know folks around you.

The truth is, we came up with a ton of plans for programming and community building, and the students, once they showed up in the fall-- they ran with it. There was a floor in Stephenson that created their own server so they could all interact and play games. I don't know how they did that. I actually don't know if it's OK with the rules. Maybe I'll get a call from [? ASIS ?] tomorrow. But that's awesome. We had students come up with social media competitions and large events where you're separate outside, but like they're scavenger hunts. And so our emphasis really is creating opportunities to still interact, but still within the rules. We also do floor meetings through Zoom where you can set expectations for your community and really take part in that ownership of the hall you're living in.

So in terms of safety precautions for the residence halls, this is really, I think, the forefront of all our planning. So when we decided we wanted to look at opening the residence halls to more students we were really grounded, I think, in the CDC and governor rules and restrictions and proclamations that were put on us. So we're stressed at keeping toilet ratios one to four. We're keeping the RA ratios one to 20. All single rooms in the residence halls this semester-- continuing that from last semester. Limiting common space sharing too to five residents, or five rooms. That's really been the foundation of our planning, is making sure that we comply with all those rules.

The other thing that we created and implemented this last fall that will also continue on in the spring-- we had a rolled out guest policy and common space policy. So it started strict in terms of, there were no guests for the first period of time. And then we were able to roll that out and

create more and more opportunities for interaction, guests in rooms, using common spaces and floors, that sort of thing as the semester went on. And I think we've gotten practiced at it. We've learned a lot of lessons from it. And I think it's going to be even more seamless this spring semester. So it's-- yeah, it'll be great.

And some of the more specific questions-- there have been questions about lounges and kitchens and all that. And I'll just say we'll start off with lounges and kitchens limited, depending on the hall. But we'll expand those as we move on and the metrics show that we aren't having an outbreak or an increase in positive diagnoses. We'll be able to move on and add more and more, I think, awesome opportunities. Some places, like laundry rooms and such, we'll schedule out so that we can keep people limited in terms of at the same time. But I think we've got a pretty solid plan there.

I also want to highlight the dining options that will be available. All three dining centers will be open next semester. So Northside, Hillside, and Southside, or [? Roto, ?] if you're an alumni, will be open, as well as the markets asso-- attached to those in the Einstein's Market and Global Scholar Hall. So you'll be able to order through the GET app and pick up food to go. Or you could show up and pick up food to go. Or you can choose to eat in the dining center. It's just, there's only a-- there's a limit of one person per table right now. That may change as the semester goes on.

But yeah, I think-- I'm really excited to welcome more students back to WSU. I love it. And I hope you'll be able to be-- experience it as much as-- as much as I've enjoyed it.

MARY JO GONZALES: So Brandon, the battle of the Coug lamp 2021 is on. I love it. That is so great. And what you have to know is that these lamps are actually pretty precious. There's not very many out there. So to Brandon, to see you pick that up--

I do want to talk a little bit more about food. I have used the GET food app multiple times. Like, I am at home, I want to-- not want to cook dinner or not want to get lunch. And I'll actually just order my food-- some amazing meals, like pho, hamburgers, tater tots, pizza, barbecue, like barbecue meat dinner. So Brandon, what have-- as you've been talking to students and engaging with students, what are some of the things they are enjoying about living on campus compared to home related to the food? What are you hearing about the food options?

BRANDON BRACKETT: Our dining department does an amazing job of creating a wide variety of dining options. So no dining center necessarily has the same thing at the same time. There's a rotation of food. And just the variety is amazing.

The dining program has also been incredibly adaptive at trying to meet students' needs during this pandemic. So they've had to reshuffle, multiple times, their approach. And they really have a solid approach with the pick up and go or dine-in option.

The food-- many years back we put a lot of money into remodeling the dining centers. And it's platform cooking. It's cooked fresh every day. And I think students really appreciate that.

There's a wide range in terms of palates. So if you like chicken strips and French fries, like my son-- that's the only thing he eats-- you'll be fine. If you want fancier stuff, there's always a wide variety of options and dining accommodations for folks. And so I-- we have an internal dining system here, and that department just is amazingly well-run and provides a really great service to our students.

MARY JO GONZALES: And that includes our sequester plans. So students who are sequestered in isolation and quarantine can actually use our GET food app to order food. And it gets delivered to them. And so that's-- again, that's the wraparound services that we've been providing to students who are living in our residential facility-- which is, again, a very small number that have tested positive. And so we want to make sure you know.

I think the piece of advice that I want to give, though-- and I think, Brandon, all of our speakers to-- prior to this would agree with is, some of what is happening is what happens off campus. So it's almost as if when students leave campus, the mask goes off, they are not practicing the safe six, which is six feet distance-- physical distance. And it's those kinds of things that we're going to need you to practice and exercise to be-- keep our community healthy and safe.

We also have been working on providing a wide variety of social engagement, social activities virtually, and some in person and I'd like to hand this over to Sylvia and Arturo to talk about, what is there to do for students? What have they been doing? And what are we planning for the spring? Because I know some of it's fun. Sylvia and Arturo.

SYLVIA BULLOCK: Hi, Cougs. So, like Marie Jo said, I'm Sylvia. I work for our cultural centers on the fourth floor of our student union. Highest floor you can go to, so it's really easy to find us.

So we're super excited. Right now we're planning for our spring. We're hoping to do a lot more distancing and safe in terms of programming, but having those in person, some of those on our floor, some of those in partnership with other campus partners. And we've been doing some in-person things in fall, obviously safely.

I know one of the really cool things that we did-- and this is a shout out to one of my colleagues, [? Dom, ?] who hopefully you'll get to meet in person soon-- was able to do grab and go for the students in different spots around Pullman. So we worked with health officials. And he was able to use a local caterer and get food to our students so they could see each other from a distance and see faces instead of just seeing them on the computer, but also being able to feed them and get a free meal. So it was really cool.

We're going to be doing-- I think we're doing painting this coming month in our Chicax/Latinx Student Center. And so doing crafts. I was in an RSO meeting last week and we had game

nights. There was a lot of Name That Tune and a very, very rigorous game of Among Us. So that's been something that's keeping students busy in person or online.

So we have a lot of really fun things coming up. And quite frankly, we want to hear from you and things that you would like to do. We're really adaptable at this point. We've learned to be hybrid, both virtual and in person. And so we want to hear about some of the things you might want to do.

In person, we are going to be open. So you'll be able to hang out in some of our species, obviously with registration and with distancing and following all of the procedures. So it's a safe place to study. If you have mentors or tutors or things like that, those spaces will be open for you, as well. So you can do distanced study sessions. I know schoolwork is always a grind. And academics come first. So we're here for you in that regard. And we'll obviously be staffed. So we'll have staff members up there if you have any questions. I know for a lot of you, this will be a new experience, living on campus.

So we just want to be available to you in person and see a friendly face. And I can tell you, obviously-- I'm a student affairs professional-- we really, really, really miss seeing you all and hearing your noises and your jokes and hearing you yell our names for whatever reason. So we really do miss you. And we're really excited to plan our spring.

And hopefully at some point we'll be able to have more people as we-- sorry. There are children running in the house. But, yeah, that we'll be able to really engage with you in person and see your faces, or at least hear your voices if we're masked. Obviously we want to be safe. Get you some cool Coug gear and everything else. Hopefully we get back to free shirts and all that fun stuff that makes being a college student fun.

So, yeah, we're really just excited in our planning stages. And we're pretty much open to hear any suggestions. We want to make sure we're accommodating you and helping you build community as you join us at WSU. We can't wait to make you Cougs in all the ways that count. And I'll let Arturo speak, because I know you guys are doing some really cool stuff, as well.

So it sounds like I got muted on. And there we go, there's Arturo. I do have to say, I love all of the Coug backgrounds. I mean, that's just-- I know I work at the URec. Or I swim at SRC, Arturo, and it's a lot of fun. So I think you're going to be talking a little bit about where we're going, correct, with URec?

ARTURO GAVILANES: Yeah. Hopefully you all can you hear me just fine. I had this panic moment where Sylvia literally just froze. And I was like, uh-oh. What's happening? But fortunately I'm back. And I'll try to keep it brief and succinct. That way I don't get cut off at some point.

I think the conversation is what we're offering and what we've been offering. And so the Student Recreation Center, along with the Chinook, have been doing their best to provide as much programming and service as we can while trying to maintain safety for our students. So

safety for our students means that we're asking our students to make reservations and register online for the courses and programs that we're offering.

We saw during this fall semester so far over 100,000 reservations at the weight room, which is phenomenal. And, yeah, the weight room was way less crowded compared to last year, in 2019. But there was a little bit more diligence that had to go into planning a workout and a bit of a recreation at our facility.

I know that our intramural program, our competitive sports program, our aquatic center, our climbing wall, our fitness center-- we're all doing our part to try to provide programming, and be it fitness class, be it education. And we're doing so in person as much as we can. Where we can't do that we're also transitioning a lot of our programming to a remote setting. For example, I might teach a primitive five buildings skills clinic online. I taught a conflict management workshop just the other day. I know that we-- this set up right here is set up exactly for delivering what I believe, right before I got in here, was a barre class.

So all of this programming that we've offered so far we're hoping to transition straight to that spring semester. And we're hoping to add things on top of it. Last year, for example, in 20-- no, sorry, 2020 spring semester, we had to cancel our climbing competition. Though we won't be able to do our climbing competition this year, we're going to be able to do something similar. Maybe not as good, but just-- maybe a few steps below it, trying to make sure that we're keeping safety in mind.

And I think that applies to a lot of what our programming might look like. Though we might not meet the expectations of, say, a 2019 year for 2020 and 2021 spring semester, we're hoping to provide as much programming and service as we can to all students, be it on campus at our facilities or be it in a remote setting, in a Zoom room.

MARY JO GONZALES: And I sign up on a regular basis for my swimming lessons. What's the process, for example, that we imagine we'll be using for reservations in spring? What does that look like? So can we talk students through? They may like the gym, and they're a little bit worried about not getting a session. Or they may like swimming. How do they go about reserving those spaces?

ARTURO GAVILANES: That's a phenomenal question. So I like to think it's really easy. I like to think that it's as easy as just going straight onto our website and click that big, bolded word that says Reservations. And from there, you can select through every-- anything that you might want. You might reserve a spot for the weight room, the spa, the climbing wall, and whatever your heart desires.

And I realize that not everybody's as used to, maybe, I might be with our website and navigating that. So if you're not comfortable visiting our website and clicking through all those buttons, you can also call our facility. Our phone number's listed on our website, as well. Call our facility, and we can help guide you through that process.

And then, worst case scenario-- if you walk in the doors wearing your masking and you say, I just don't have a reservation, but I still want to work out, what can I do? Our membership attendance there can give you an up-to-date look at what is available. So maybe you won't get exactly the machine you were looking for, but we can help guide you towards something that fits your needs.

MARY JO GONZALES: Absolutely. And I love that, because part of what we need to do is to make sure that our Cougs are having that full experience. And that includes taking care of stress and managing all that. It's also about building community. And one of the things that I know we've been working on very hard-- and I'm going to have Jill talk for a few minutes about, what does that mean, to create your own community and find the people that are going to help you be successful? So Jill, do you want to talk about some of that and some of the ways that we're seeing students connect on campus?

JILL CREIGHTON: Absolutely. I think that's the core question that a lot of students ask us, is how do I meet people? Because the Cougar community is so large. It can be a little overwhelming to find your people and find your niche, find your squad.

One of the things that we're excited for in the spring semester is introducing a new software to the student experience called Presence. And Presence is going to be a centralized hub that allows students to click through a myriad of options-- clubs, organizations, events, leadership conferences, resources. And you'll be able to find something that interests you. And at WSU, if you don't see a club or organization that fits with your interests, you can also always make one as long as you have a couple other folks who are also interested in the same interest or hobby or common academic experience, whatever that might be. We can help you find a place.

And as Brandon mentioned earlier, we have had some phenomenal success this year in building very small micro communities on floors of residence halls or with folks who like to lift weights in the vicinity of each other, six feet apart, folks who are connecting around identity. That's a lot of the work that Sylvia and her peers are doing, to help create identity in those spaces. So there's no shortage of opportunities. It's just, I think the first challenge and hurdle is, how do I find those opportunities? So keep your eyes out for the Presence application that will be launching, like I said, in the spring semester.

The other thing that's been happening that is phenomenal is the Student Entertainment Board, or SEB, for short, has been hosting a myriad of different private events for WSU students that are all virtual. So regardless of whether you choose to come to campus and live in the residence halls or you're going to remain home at your permanent address-- you're welcome to do either for your first-year live-in requirement-- we do have engagement opportunities. And we want you to take advantage of them.

I also always advise students to find connections with your major. Most often you'll be in a class where you need to be in a small group project or you need to form a study group. And that's a

really fantastic way to connect with folks that have a common topic in mind. Or you can also find clubs and organizations that are affiliated directly with your major.

So we will create the spaces for you. And as long as you show up in them, we'll be able to get you connected. And as always, if you don't know where to start, you can always start with us in the Office of the Dean of Students. And we will help you find your way.

MARY JO GONZALES: And I don't want to kill the vice president vibe that I have, but I attended the Rico Nasty concert a couple weeks ago. And I am attending the Sunbeatz one tonight. But that's the kind of just place where you can engage and relax. We will, again, be-- as the governor allows and as the University approves, we will be moving towards more in-person events and more in-person activities. And again, as long as you're following the rules and doing what you need to do, we can do it in a safe and effective manner.

And so one of the other places that we have to talk about is this-- what do we do to follow the rules? And hey, Mary Jo, what are the rules? I'd really like us to stay focused on Cougs helping Cougs. And that also means we help each other be accountable for the decisions and the choices we made.

When I go to campus I make sure that I'm wearing my mask. One day I happened to go into the office. I had stepped out of my office and immediately turned back around because I had lost-- I had not put on my mask. And that was my job to make sure that I was taking care of the people who were in the office space with me and who I was going to meet.

And so Karen, you have had to deal with a lot of that high-level-- how do we help manage some of that student behavior? And again, it's not about discipline. It's not about the stick. It's really about taking care of each other in our Coug community. Do you want to share some of your thoughts on that?

KAREN METZNER: Yeah. Thanks, Mary Jo. So I'm with the Center for Community Standards. And our purpose is, first and foremost, to support students in their time here at WSU to uphold your rights and responsibilities. And also, we play a role in holding folks accountable for behavior that doesn't meet our community expectations.

We realize, with COVID, we are all learning different skill sets and different muscle memory. And sometimes you turn around and you forget your mask, or you-- those things are not necessarily as ingrained in us as the things that we've been doing for our entire lives. And we understand that that's a transition. And so we want to approach the concerns that we see, first and foremost, with policy clarification and education.

So in many cases, our first step from my office is to send a reminder to say, hey, we received some information. Just so that you're aware, these are the expectations that we need to follow. That being said, if we do see repeated reckless or egregious violations of our community

expectations surrounding COVID compliance they will be addressed through the community standards process-- excuse me-- through the community standards process.

So some potential outcomes if you are a student and you're referred to our office for a violation of COVID compliance related concerns-- we're going to meet with you. We're going to talk about what happened. We're going to talk about why it happened. And we're going to figure out, where do we go from here?

And so if the concern is that you keep forgetting your mask and it's the-- you've been referred to us a number of times because you regularly forget it, we'll talk with you about some strategies to figure out a plan so that doesn't become the pattern that we make permanent. If it is that you're struggling to find social connection in the context of this hybrid virtual, in-person world that we're in, we're going to talk with you about how to plug you into those clubs on Presence and how to plug you into the events happening in the Multicultural Student Services and to get you the support that you need to be successful here.

So we work really closely with Pullman Police, Washington State University Police, with the Department of Residence Life, with community members. And we take all of that report in. And then we will contact students and follow up as appropriate. Some potential outcomes that could happen if you were to be referred to our office for a COVID-related violation could be things like warnings, disciplinary probations, workshops, educational things.

We've worked with the Cougar Health Services to develop a workshop called Together. And Together really focuses on, how do we adapt our behavior so that we can meet our needs in a COVID-compliant way? And what does that look like? And how do we acknowledge that there's some loss there? Things don't look the same that they used to. And knowing that, how do we still move forward?

Ultimately, with really high-level, repeated, egregious violations it can result in a referral to the University Conduct Board, which could result in a dismissal from the University. But that's certainly not the first step we take on our response. We really want to work with you to figure out what's working, what's not working, how do we get you plugged into the things that you need to, and how do we work together to keep this experience safe for everybody. We all want the same thing. We all want to go back to, airquote, "normal." And so part of that is working together to figure out what that pathway looks like.

MARY JO GONZALES: So Karen, taking care of each other is a hard thing to do, right? What are you finding-- what message would you say is the number one thing we have to do for-- to take care of each other in the community?

KAREN METZNER: A fantastic question, Mary Jo. I think the number one thing that I would say in regards to taking care of our community-- one is to just not get lax. I think we've been in this world for a little bit now, and so it's easy to get a little sluggish about our compliance. I think

the other thing is we really just need to commit to be really creative. And so when we are looking at, how do we meet our social needs and how do we connect with each other?

It doesn't look the same. But that doesn't mean that it has to be gone. It just has to look different. And so I think that commitment to creativity and to embracing that it's going to look different, but we'll-- as a team, everyone on this call, everyone who has spoken tonight, we all want to work together to figure out how we can get you those experiences and make those memories in a safe way so that you get that Cougar experience that you're wanting.

MARY JO GONZALES: Yeah. Grief is a pretty legitimate thing to be focusing on right now that we've just all lost all of our focus at some level, sometimes our attention. Sometimes we're lonely. I've spent a lot of time with students in the past couple weeks, and what I'm hearing is isolation and loneliness, that they just don't feel connected.

Dr. Vu, are you comfortable talking a little bit about how the medical clinic works with our counseling and psychological services to support some of those mental health concerns that come up for our students?

LEYEN VU: Sure, Mary Jo. Thanks. That's a great question, because there's-- it's such an important part of health care for college students. So one of the nice things is-- first, it's proximity. The medical clinic is in the first floor of the Washington building, which is between the Spark building and Stephenson's Hall. And we're on the first floor. And then on the third floor is our Counseling And Psychological Services, otherwise known as CAPS.

So students that seek mental health care can access care in a number of ways. First is, if they want to see a medical provider first, they can make an appointment at the medical clinic with one of us. Or they can actually be seen directly up at CAPS, can see a counselor first, a psychologist.

And there's such good communication between the medical clinic and the Counseling and Psychological Services that if, let's say, I see a student first for, let's say, depression or anxiety, or they can't sleep-- if I deem them appropriate for counseling services I can just call up there and get them to be even seen same day, if they need to. And the reverse is true. So if a psychologist is seeing one of our students upstairs and says, this student would really benefit from medicines, then they just shoot me a message.

We're actually on the same electronic medical record. So they can communicate with us that way. So it's pretty seamless. And so we can see them in a short time, too. And so there's a lot of collaboration between the two departments.

MARY JO GONZALES: And that's really important. We do know and we have heard from our students and their families about the concerns related to mental health. And we will continue to work in those partnerships and navigate those relationships for students so that they can get the support that they need when they need it.

There was a question that I thought was really important that came up in chat around, what do we do if we have an outbreak on campus? And I would love to have Sean-- I'd like to talk with-- have you talk a little bit about the partnerships that we engaged in to increase testing at a really critical time. And then Jill, I'll have you talk about the relationships that we worked with the landlord and our fraternity and sorority communities to address those issues pretty directly. So Sean, how about you?

SEAN GREENE: Well, as far as the testing, we have-- currently, on-- in the fall semester, the Army National Guard is here on site. And they're providing testing Monday through Friday. And that is available to all WSU students, and including faculty, staff who are also working on campus. So we've expanded our testing. And in fact, the Army National Guard has conducted over 6,000 tests since they arrived in early September.

With that, we will also be working with Environmental Health and Safety, who has a tight partnership with Whitman County Health. And we will do-- be doing-- and Brandon, I think, touched on wastewater testing. This would allow us, at times, as they're testing wastewater, to identify how much of the virus is present in a specific residence hall. We will be able to actually specify exactly which residence hall, in which case we would then be able to jump into a more active testing plan to try to find out what is going on. We've worked very closely with our environmental health and safety group to identify, how do we treat our-- or, find students and give them the opportunities to identify if-- and get tested, and then also provide facilities for them?

MARY JO GONZALES: Jill?

JILL CREIGHTON: Sure. So the Pullman community is really excited for the opportunity to have some of-- a bit of a sense of normalcy back with us right now. There is a multitude of landlords that I have the privilege of working with on a pretty regular basis that are typically housing our sophomore and above students.

What they're seeing in their community is our students doing the right thing, which is really important. Our students are masking. Our students are washing their hands. Our students are avoiding large gatherings in the overwhelming majority that that's happening. So that's really wonderful to see.

Our fraternities and sororities have offered bids to several hundred students this fall semester who are part of the first-year student class. We have a very active FSL community here at WSU. Unfortunately, they're not able to house freshmen this coming spring semester. But they are very excited to have folks back into the community. If you have been watching Governor Inslee's orders for higher education, they affected not only residence life for public institutions in the state of Washington, but also fraternity and sorority life houses, which are actually privately owned and operated but still impacted by the governor's guidance for higher education.

So with that all in mind, our FSL students just elected their brand-new Panhellenic and IFC presidents. Their names are Sam, for Panhellenic, and [? Reese ?] for IFC. And they are looking forward to engaging with you to build community and philanthropy. So there's going to be many opportunities if you are affiliated with that community. Our MGC community will elect their next year's leader coming up in just five days, here. So we'll be able to announce who that person is as soon as that has been completed.

But all of that to say, there is community on campus. There is community off campus. We do have a public transit system in Pullman. If you've not been here before, our public transit system is buses. And right now our buses are, in fact, limited by COVID-19 in terms of how many people can get on a bus. But there is a bit of a shopping corridor on Bishop Boulevard, which is just one hill over from campus. And you can take a bus to get there.

Also, downtown Pullman is super walkable. So if you want to go grab takeout from a local restaurant and take it back to the residence halls with you, that's also definitely an option. So we're looking forward to having those of you who are interested in coming this spring. And our community is looking forward to meeting you, too.

MARY JO GONZALES: And Jill, I know one of the areas that you help supervise and work with is our fraternity and sorority community. And we did make the decision to not have first-year students live in our fraternity and sorority chapters. We know folks are disappointed about that. But we do believe that we can keep our students safe in the residence halls. And that is where we intend to keep them.

Do you want to talk a little bit about what you know the fraternity and sorority community has been doing in partnering with us, especially the student leaders, about helping manage some of those behaviors off campus? And by the way, we have a-- what we talk about is that this is a leadership opportunity and a leadership experience for our students. So there's a lot of rumors, a lot of innuendo about what happens in the fraternity and sorority community. We also know that it produces-- it supports a lot of the philanthropy and the efforts to build community on campus. So Jill, would you like to talk a little bit about that?

JILL CREIGHTON: I have been so impressed with the leaders in our fraternity and sorority life community. They have been intentional, vocal advocates for the needs of the students that live in that part of College Hill. I think the biggest thing that we're seeing is requests for how fraternities and sororities can participate in what we call screening testing for COVID-19.

Right now on campus we are working with external partners to ensure that students can get tested for free. That is for both diagnostic testing, meaning that you might feel sick, or screening testing, meaning that there's absolutely nothing going wrong but you are just curious, or you want to help us understand what's happening in the community. So we are working with our fraternities and sororities very closely to help with arrival testing back to campus for students who will go home for Thanksgiving and the remainder of winter break.

And we did change our academic calendar. So there is a delay between when folks might leave for the fall semester and arrive for the spring. And so we know folks will see different parts of your families or interact with friends from your hometowns and things like that. And we hope that you all continue to do that wearing your mask and staying six feet apart. And when we want students to come back, we want you to be able to do that in a way that we can limit the spread of COVID-19 in the Pullman community. So that's all happening.

We're also working heavily with the Cougs Cancel COVID Campaign, which is part of Student Affairs. So Cougs Cancel COVID encompasses a variety of messages and promoted positive public health behaviors. And that has been working for our community, too.

I also want to let folks know that if you are an off-campus student-- and I know mostly, in our audience today, you're first years. But if you are a sophomore and above and you're living off campus and you get sick, we do have resources for you on campus, as well. So there are a number of ways that we're here to support you. I know that there are way more questions coming in chat than we have capacity to answer in the 12 minutes we've got left in our town hall. So you're welcome to always reach out to us, too, if you've got something specific that we didn't get to.

MARY JO GONZALES: yeah, and Jill, we rely a lot on student input. And Sylvia, I think you've got some great examples of where students are leading some of these efforts and connecting with Cougs and engaging that effort. So Sylvia, do you want to talk about the Spotify you've got going on?

SYLVIA BULLOCK: Yeah, sure. I can talk about a few of the things. So one of the things-- I like to call them challenges. But one of the things that's been really great to see this semester is-- we obviously have student workers in our unit. And they've really risen to the challenge, particularly around communication and reaching out to the community, creating a virtual community, as Jill talked about earlier. And a few of the things that we've done is the news-- we have created a newsletter for our central office. And so really getting information out and having it themed.

So we talked about our student conferences. We've talked about how to be civically engaged with-- in the voting process. We've talked about our Greek organization. So a little bit about that, particularly our multicultural Greek organizations. In addition to that, we've been really active on our social media, having a lot of interactive posts. We had our social media going during our resource fair. And that's another really cool thing that we hope to continue in the spring so students can get to know our student organizations.

And then we started a podcast. So our students-- it's completely run by our students. And so we've talked a little bit about what we do as a unit. And our first episode and our most recent episode has been around COVID and mental health. We really wanted to do an episode on that, because that's the main thing our students have been talking about in terms of being isolated, not being able to talk to your friends, see each other in person, hang out.

And the person that we interviewed actually is an alum of WSU, [? Sharice ?] [? Deguseman, ?] who works in the mental health field here in Washington State. So we wanted to have a Cougar alum be able to sit down with our current Cougs. And so it's a really nice episode. It's split into two parts. So if you just want to get to the interview you can do that. We do all of our wonderful announcements. We talk about programming and everything.

And so we put out an episode about every three weeks. My students will be ecstatic to be promoted on YouTube today. So that'll be very exciting. They work very hard. And they've stepped up to the plate every way.

And it's just really cool to see the ways in which all of you students are super creative when times like this come around. And so we're just super proud. And we're really happy to share that information with the Cougar community. And if you have ideas for episodes that you want our students to do, we're happy to take those suggestions and try to make it work for you.

MARY JO GONZALES: Well, and the-- one of the other ways-- in the Division of Student Affairs, we are the largest employer of students. And I think we will have-- Arturo, are you comfortable talking about some of the employment opportunities in URec and in other locations on campus?

ARTURO GAVILANES: Yeah, absolutely. I'm happy to. Hopefully that podcast link went into chat. At some point I know there was a question about that.

But yeah, WSU absolutely hires a lot of student employees. Actually, student employees are a major contributor to our community here on campus in that as an organization, as an institution, WSU wants to professionally develop students as they progress in their career. So University Recreation, the department I'm affiliated with, CUB, housing and dining, a lot of different entities on campus are often looking to employ students to fulfill the roles that would have them interacting face to face or remotely, at this point, with other students on campus.

So speaking for Student Rec-- the Student Recreation Center and Chinook, I know that we just got-- went through one of our hiring sessions. And we hired from-- I'll speak towards climbing wall supervisors and fitness instructors, to the front-facing staff who are greeting you at the doors. We do quite a bit of training to get people on board and make sure that they're up-to-date on the latest of COVID education so that they can offer peer-to-peer education while earning a little bit of money and continuing to work towards their academic goals.

MARY JO GONZALES: And in the division, one of the things that you will know is you can also participate actively in any of our committees. We have a Housing and Dining Rate Setting Committee. We have a Student Health Advisory Committee. And many of these are helping guide the direction. So please know your voice as a student is very important in this process for us.

Hey, Brandon, I'm going to come to you for a quick second. I wanted to know, because there's a question-- a couple of questions around single occupancy. Why did we choose single occupancy?

BRANDON BRACKETT: We chose single occupancy for a number of reasons. It's easier to socially distance when you have your own space. We just didn't think that it would be as safe if you had roommates living together. Some of our rooms aren't big enough to get your beds six feet apart. And if you have your own room then you can go back and you can take your mask off once your door closes and such. And so it just seemed like both for comfort and for practicality, in terms of limiting exposure opportunities, and common touch surfaces, and just sharing the same air sources, that single rooms seemed to be the much safer choice to go. And so that's why we did it this fall and why we're sticking with it this spring.

MARY JO GONZALES: Absolutely. And that doesn't mean, for example, that there are going to be just one or two people on a floor. Brandon, what will that look like on some of those places, in some of our halls? How many people will they be around, maybe in a given room structure or room setting for the floor?

BRANDON BRACKETT: It depends on how many students we get who accept or want to come back here in the spring. But our plan is to at least be able to build some larger communities than we've had in the fall. So I would say that we're looking at a ratio of 1 to 20 at our maximum level in terms of RAs, which usually means about 20 people on a floor.

Now, we have a really diverse residence hall system. We have halls back from the 18-- we have a hall from 1890 still around and halls from three-- that were built four years ago. And so the variety of floor size and accommodations is just incredibly vast. And so you can look at the floor plans on Housing's website. You might be able to get an idea of how many people on your floor or how many rooms are available, that sort of thing. But one to 20 is going to be the average of what we're shooting for. And the range will be dependent on the facilities and the actual footprint of the building.

MARY JO GONZALES: Exactly. And that's right, again-- getting the help that you need is also really critical. And so as we close what I'm going to do is ask each of our speakers to give one piece of advice to our new students about their areas and programs. And I'm going to start-- Jenni, what would you say is what you want students to remember about Cougar Health Services?

JENNI DALTON: So Cougar Health Services is a wonderful facility. We have exceptional health care providers and clinical support staff. We can really see you for all of your health care needs. It's all one big building in one just for you guys. And really, if you're not sure, never hesitate to just pick up the phone and give us a call. We'll help you navigate in whatever way we need to and so that you're able to get health care that you really need.

MARY JO GONZALES: I love it. Sylvia, what about you?

SYLVIA BULLOCK: Sure. I guess my biggest piece of advice is, community looks different, but it's no less important. And we've worked no less hard in building it this semester. And so our staff is always here for our students. We've been checking in over the past several weeks, and really all semester, just trying to stay in constant communication and using all sorts of tools and new software and digital platforms and everything else to really stay in touch with you all and help you stay in touch with each other, whether you officially or unofficially have mentors or anything of that nature. And hopefully a lot of you will get that when you come to campus.

Ultimately, our information's on the website. Information's on social media. You can always reach out to us. We are super eager to help you and available to help you. So we're really just here for you to be an outlet and to get you to the resources that you need. And we want you to feel as welcome, whether you're here in person or you're remote, to our Cougar community. So just reach out, and we'll be there. I know it's very cheesy, but yes.

MARY JO GONZALES: Hey, Brandon, how about you?

BRANDON BRACKET: Well, they stole my answer. The community here is what you make of it. Everybody brings their own piece, their own unique experience. And so when you get here, don't be afraid to share that, to create programs around your interests, bring other people and invite them together.

It's my hope that this whole experience brings a renewed value to community. And so make it what you want it to be and engage as much as you can. It's such a great experience. And it's different during COVID and during the pandemic, but it's a special place. And if you take some risk and put yourself out there and get on a Zoom you're not uncomfortable with or go in a five-or-under meal outside you're going to get a lot of dividends. And I'm here because an RA invited me to dinner one day. And so the impact and the effect it'll have on your life-- it can be tremendous.

MARY JO GONZALES: I love it, Brandon. Arturo, how about you?

ARTURO GAVILANES: Snaps to that, Brandon. Visit our website. We have very intentionally put everything that we can offer on our website. If you can't find what you're looking for, give us a call. We're happy to help you navigate that. So I'll leave it at that.

MARY JO GONZALES: Karen, how about you?

KAREN METZNER: I think my one closing remark would be, we're more than just the rule people. We get that a lot of people don't drop in to say hello in our office. We try not to take it personally. But we really, truly are here to help support you as part of a team of people supporting you in navigating your WSU experience and finding your pathway here.

And yeah, we do have accountability as part of our role. But it's certainly part of the way that we approach our work. Also, we want to see you be successful and help you in your transition to WSU or in-- as you continue your transition into WSU.

MARY JO GONZALES: Dr. Vu, Leyen.

LEYEN VU: This is more of a global sentiment, but from the time I've been here I haven't met such a passionate group of students that cares so much about their community and love their Cougar experience. And that's just not just the students that are currently attending college here, but even extends to alumni.

The Cougar experience is something that is-- you can't even put into words, really. And it's much different than my own college experience, prior, as well. And so just seeing the passion, the energy, the love that Cougs have for one another-- like Mary Jo said, Cougs taking care of Cougs-- there's no other place that I'd rather go to college, especially during a pandemic.

MARY JO GONZALES: I concur, Dr. Vu. Jill.

JILL CREIGHTON: There are so many professionals that are talented and passionate about your success. And those folks are in every building on campus. So regardless of your academic identity at WSU, or your residence hall assignment, or your stay home status, we're here for you. And I know that sounds overwhelming to a degree. But also, we really are.

So if you make it appointment with Office of the Dean of Students and you just want to understand what your options are, just come say hello. And we'll be here to help you navigate things. So again, we can't do it for you, but we can show you where to go. So the realities of what Dr. Vu was saying, what Brandon is saying, what Arturo is saying around just show up-- that's so huge. Be in the spaces that you might be a little uncomfortable being in. Challenge yourself. That's what college is for.

And we know this is not the first year experience that any of you planned or wanted for yourself. It's not the first year experience that we had planned for you originally, either. We are doing our best to create an experience that is meaningful for you. And if there are things that we can do differently or better for you, we would love to hear from you on that, too. So make the decision that's right for your family. And should you come, we're here for you. Should you stay at your personal address, we're here for you.

MARY JO GONZALES: And it's OK to pick up the phone and call. That's the other piece of the equation. Sean, what about you?

SEAN GREENE: Well, everybody's talked about it, but we've spent so much time in this whole pandemic talking about all the things that we can't do. There is a lot for students to do while they're on campus. Look at the student organizations and how they're getting involved. University Recreation and the sport clubs-- Arturo's talked a lot about just go to the website of

reaching out. And Brandon talked about talk to an RA, talk to somebody in residence life. There's a lot going on. And sometimes, don't concentrate on what you can't do but the things that we can.

MARY JO GONZALES: So as we close today, all of my colleagues and I are really excited to have you continue with us in the Cougar family. I'm going to go back to the words of the fight song. We all need to fight, fight, fight for Washington State. The victory that we're going to win is going to have to be over COVID and making sure that we stay connected to our community.

We're going to have to do our best. And in this time of COVID, it doesn't always look as easy as we want it to be. But the honor and glory that we're going to win is that we're going to take care of each other. And as Arturo has on his wonderful face the mask-- so, Rob, let's go to the big screen with everybody here, because that honor and glory is really about taking care of one another, doing what we need to do to take care of one another.

And so I won't go through the W-A-S-H-I-N-G-- well, maybe I am-- Washington State spelling out. But at the end of that it is Go Cougs. So I'd invite all of you, all of my guests, to say Go Cougs as we end the day for crimson and gray and fight for Washington State. So thank you all for being here. We look forward to connecting with all of you in the future. And let's go, Cougs!

ALL: Go Cougs.