

# WSU COVID-19 Town Hall – December 9

>> Good morning, everyone.

Thank you for joining us for our 14th COVID-19 Town Hall meeting.

As with our other means this is open to folks across the state of Washington and beyond, and we're glad that you're able to join us.

My name is Phil Weiler.

I'm Vice President for Marketing and

Communications and I'll be serving as our moderator for today.

This is going to be our last COVID-19 Town Hall for 2020.

But fear not we have our first town hall for 2021

already scheduled for those of you following along at home.

This next town hall is planned for Thursday,

January 28th at 11:00 AM.

This'll be one week after classes get started.

We hope that we can have students joining us for this one as well.

This one's going to be a little bit special, a little bit different.

The President's Commission on the Status of Women

expressed interest in having a town hall really geared toward caregivers.

By that we mean folks who are either taking care of young children at

home or perhaps who are taking care of older family members as well.

What the Commission was hoping for is that we could provide caregivers with

very practical real-world advice and tips on how

to ease that burden of caregiving while also working full time,

trying to maintain a household and

taking care of all the other responsibilities that we have in life.

Watch for that. Again, that's going to be Thursday,

January 28th at 11:00 AM.

Let's talk about today's town hall.

We have a number of topics we'd like to cover in the next hour.

We're going to talk first about the no record COVID grade.

This is a new grade option,

it's available to students.

Information has been shared about this but I think there are

some questions based on what we've seen in the questions that were submitted in advance.

Provost Chilton is going to spend some time talking about the no record COVID grade.

We'll also talk about housing on the Pullman campus.

There will be a different approach

to moving in this year so we'll talk about what that looks like.

Hopefully we might see some additional students being able

to join us on campus for the spring semester.

We'll share some news about that as well.

In addition, we'll talk about arrival testing that we have

in place both for the Pullman campus as

well as a plan that's being put together

for testing on the COVID-19 testing on the Spokane campus.

Many of you are aware the state of Washington has asked

Washington State University to help out with the receipt,

storage, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine.

We'll talk a little bit about what that looks like and how WSU is trying to

be of service to the greater state of Washington around the distribution of the vaccine.

Then we'll hear from a couple of WSU researchers who are doing work in this area.

One research has discovered a protein that could lead to therapies that would help patients who are experiencing an overblown inflammatory response.

There's a pharmaceutical company that is licensing that technology and will be putting together clinical trials in the future.

This could very well lead to therapies or help people either with COVID or other related kinds of illnesses.

We'll also hear from a researcher who is taking a look at the impact of COVID-19 related discrimination on Asians and Asian-Americans and how this is directly impacting their health and gives a very timely conversation there.

Then finally, we'll finish up with an update on where we are with infection rates on the WSU Pullman campus in particular.

As we've done in the past we asked viewers to submit their questions in advance online, had a number of people who did that.

We've shared those questions with panelists.

I know some folks have adjusted their remarks based on what we saw in those questions.

We also, as we've always done, have our subject matter experts watching the chat function on YouTube. If people are posting questions there, they'll do their best to answer those questions in real time.

Let me introduce our panelists quickly;

Dr. Kirk Schulz is President of Washington State University,

Dr. Elizabeth Chilton is our Provost and Executive Vice President,

Dr. Jill Creighton is our Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Campus Life,

Colleen Kerr is Vice President for External Affairs and Government Relations,

Dr. Daryll Dewald is Vice President for Health Sciences.

He's also the Chancellor of our WSU Health Sciences Campus in Spokane,

Dr. Santanu Bose is a professor of

Veterinary Microbiology and Pathology in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

He's based on the Pullman campus,

Dr. Sara Waters is

Assistant Professor in Human Development in the College of Agriculture,

Human and Natural Resources Sciences on our Vancouver campus and finally,

Jason Sampson is with us.

He's the Assistant Director of Environmental Services,

Public Health and Sustainability.

With those introductions out of the way,

let me ask Dr. Schulz if he would care to share some opening remarks with us.

>> Well, hello Cougs and welcome to another town hall.

I appreciate all my colleagues being with me

today and I look forward to answering your questions

and keeping you informed about what WSU is doing under this really trying time.

Let me just express my appreciation to our faculty, to our staff,

and our students for all of your efforts to make this fall semester successful.

It wasn't quite what we envisioned and I think I remember back to the spring term

when we elected to go from in-person to online during the semester.

I think so many of us thought, "Hey, this is going to be a fairly short period of time."

Here we are, not quite a year later

still working through the pandemic and still hopefully we

believe bringing forward a great WSU educational experience

under these really challenging times.

Our faculty are working real hard.

Our staff are working hard.

Then those of you who are students that are joining us today also

I appreciate your flexibility through these times and we're

looking forward to being back in person in '21 back

to the full educational experience that we think is all part of being a Cougar.

That is not just classroom and those types of things but all the other things

on all of our campus locations that are part of what makes WSU special.

This holiday, this Thanksgiving,

normally for the Schulz family,

we have my in-laws,

we have my two sons and a daughter in-law come all to join us.

We go to the Apple Cup,

have a big family gathering.

This year, like a lot of places,

they were just two of us.

My wife and I were together.

Our children and families stayed safe.

They were in different locations around the United States and we just

want to remind everybody [NOISE] for these holidays please,

make sure you take precautions during the holidays.

What we find sometimes and some of

my colleagues have talked about this with COVID-19 transmission,

it's not in the workplace it's that after hours

types of things those get-togethers with friends.

This is not just our students,  
this is faculty staff,  
leadership in the university.

[NOISE] All of us have to be careful and take precautions.

During the holidays, it may feel a little awkward at times but please,  
remember to wear a mask,  
wash your hands, and watch your distance.

You can be around people,  
but [NOISE] keep that distance apart.

Also I love to travel,

I love to get on airplanes and do all that.

But just as a quick reminder,

if you can just limit travel during the holiday season.

We're seeing spiking coronavirus across the nation.

We're seeing in our state,

in our region, in all of our locations where we have campuses.

So please just limit that holiday travel, if at all possible.

Then finally, for our colleagues in the workplace,

one of the fun things around this time of year is having get-togethers  
with our people we worked with all year and holiday gatherings.

Those holiday gatherings this year need to be  
virtual and come up with creative things to do.

But again, those fun office parties

or get-togethers with people that we worked with all semester,

they're going to have to be virtual and we just want to remind  
people to continue to be diligent.

I also want to express some optimism for 2021.

Unlike many of you, I can't wait for 2020 to be done.

But I also think back to the resiliency of faculty,  
staff, students, of parents,  
of alumni and people through this really trying time,  
not just for WSU and not just for the state of Washington,  
but indeed the nation and the world.

I'm a glass half full kind of person.

We still got some bumps in the road and some challenges to overcome,  
but Cougs are going to help out Cougs whether that's in the classroom,  
whether that's learning, whether that's in our communities.

I think I still am optimistic that as the vaccine is widely distributed that  
2021 and particularly a few months from  
now it's going to feel a lot more like it did a couple years ago.

Finally, no matter where you're located,  
I want to encourage everybody, if at all possible,  
to support your local businesses,  
especially restaurants and things like that,  
if you have the financial means to do so.

Our small business community in the state of Washington is really hurting right now.

Just a reminder, if you can do something to help out that local restaurant,  
that local small business wherever you're located in Pullman or elsewhere,  
please try and do that.

It's very meaningful.

It's a tough time for our businesses and

it's important for Cougs to help out in our communities like we always do.

Phil, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words.

Look forward to hearing from my colleagues and for everybody out there stay safe,

stay distant, wash your hands,

wear a mask and as always Go Cougs.

>> Thanks Kirk. I actually appreciate you mentioning the importance of shopping locally.

I agree.

I think that this is a particularly difficult time for

our small businesses and a lot of

those folks are going to need all the support they can get.

I know for my situation,

it's those local businesses and restaurants that make the community what it is.

I think it would be horrible if we lost them.

Anyway, I echo your recommendation,

and your support for local business.

I'd like now to have Dr. Chilton talk with us about the No Record COVID grade.

As I mentioned, we received several questions in advance about that.

I think students are curious about it.

They would like some more information.

I think it would be helpful just to be able to

make sure students understand how it would work if

they chose to go with that option with classes this particular semester.

Elizabeth, I'll turn it over to you.

>> Well, thank you very much, Phil.

First of all, I wanted to underscore

some of the things that Kirk was saying a minute ago.



I'm coming to the end of my first full semester as Provost at WSU.

I've been really impressed with how our faculty and staff

have worked [NOISE] so hard to support our students,

and to support each other throughout the semester.

[NOISE] This is one example of a collaborative approach to

finding ways to [NOISE] support our students.

First of all, faculty and staff

recognized that remote learning is extremely challenging for students.

Many of our students are trying to balance many other roles and

responsibilities in their personal and their professional lives.

We also know that many students don't have reliable access to internet.

They may not have stable housing or family support or other key resources.

We wanted to find a way to support our students

in making academic progress towards their degrees,

but at the same time,

making sure that they were set up well in terms of

their access to federal and state financial aid.

Making sure their transcripts are as strong as possible as

they might be applying for scholarships as well as graduate school,

for example, or professionals programs.

We're really have been looking for creative ways

to try to balance all of those many needs.

We also looked at a number of peers in terms of what they were doing.

Many of the institutions,

including the one I was added in the spring move

to a pass-fail option and extended the deadline.

We still had a pass-fail option for this fall,  
and students could elect to do that if they felt that they  
were in a place where that was going to be best for them.

Really, all credit due to the staff and academic affairs into  
the Faculty Senate who helped us move towards this new policy.

But we created an NRC grades.

It stands for No Record COVID.

An NRC grade allows courses to be excluded from  
calculations of academic progress for financial aid purposes,  
so won't count negatively against those.

The way it works is that faculty assign letter grades as usual.

Then students, once they receive their final grades,  
they can elect to change a C-minus or below.

C-minus, D-plus, D and F, and withdrawal,  
students can change those to NRC grades, No Record COVID.

Students can do this for fall 2020,  
and we're also going to do it for the full academic year,  
so spring 2021 as well.

An NRC grade functions like extending the withdrawal deadline,  
except that it doesn't leave this W on your transcript notation,  
which doesn't indicate the reason it replaces  
it with what we think is a more neutral No Record COVID.

An NRC grade doesn't provide credit.

It does not count towards the withdrawal limit.

It does not count towards the number of allowed repeat attempts on a particular course.

All students in undergraduate and graduate courses can elect this NRC grade option after they've received their final grades. There are some, for example, professional health science careers and medicine pharmacy and veteran medicine. Those are excluded from this NRC great option in part because of accreditation issues. Also in all students in the online MBA program are excluded from this.

If you have any questions or you're not sure,

"Is this right for me?

Should I take a C-minus,

is that better than getting an NRC grade,

which would not give me credit for that class?"

Please do talk this through with your academic advisors. [NOISE]

I'm going to ask Vice Provost Craig Parks to

put in the chat a link to the Faculty Senate website,

which has links to questions about contacting your academic advisor,

impacts on financial aid,

and hopefully it would address any of the detail question for your specific situation.

>> Great. Thank you. Elizabeth. That was very complete, I appreciate.

I learned some new things as well about the No Record COVID. Thank you.

I did note that Terese King from Academic Success and the Career Center did post a link already in the chat for people who want more information about this option.

Again, it's something that students should take a look at

and decide if it makes sense for them.

But also we would always encourage you to touch

base with an academic advisor and make sure that you

are making the best decision for your particular situation. Thanks, Elizabeth.

Next, I'd like to turn to Dr. Jill Creighton.

We'd like to learn more about what we're doing around housing on the Pullman Campus.

Jill, I know that we had a limited number of

students living in the residence halls in the fall,

and our experience actually was quite good from a COVID perspective.

We saw a little, if any,

issues with students in the residence halls getting ill.

Experience showed that they were following

their health protocols very closely and doing the right thing.

I know that our hope is that we can have a modest increase in

the number of students living on campus in the spring semester,

but as part of that, the move-in process I know is going to be different.

Can you share a little bit of information with us about what

move-in will look like for those students who are coming back to Pullman.

>> Absolutely. Thanks Phil.

If you decide that you wanted to join us in

Pullman as a first-time first-year student for spring 2021,

and you met the priority deadline,

your email should have been populated on

Monday with more information on how to sign up for your move-in time.

As Phil mentioned, move-in is going to be pretty structured this coming spring.

What that means is a couple of things.

The first is that you do need to sign up for a move-in day and time.

That time slot is a one-hour time slot.

I do want to clarify that,

that doesn't mean your family only has one hour to move in.

What it does mean is that it's going to be your slot to arrive at Beasley Coliseum,

which is more commonly known as our basketball arena,

amongst other major events on campus.

We're utilizing the big space, NBC Coliseum,

or really the rotunda around the big space rather,

to ensure that we can have a physically distance experience for students to come in.

If you submit your Cougar card photo in advance,

you'll pick your Cougar card up at your first stop.

We really want you to upload that photo well in

advance so we can just check you right off.

The next stop would be to receive a COVID-19 arrival tests.

I'll talk more about that in a little bit.

Then the final step would be to get your keys and then had to your residence hall room.

Students will be limited to

two guests that can come with you to help you with the move-in process,

and we need you to do that for physical distancing reasons.

Everyone will be required to be masked the entire time

they're within the residence hall check-in process.

Both students and their visitors will be required to complete

an attestation stating that you are not exhibiting symptoms that day,

and that you are not known to be exposed to

COVID-19 recently or experiencing COVID-19 on that day.

Again, the one-hour time slot that you sign up for is to go through that arrival process,

it's not the limited time to move into your physical room.

That when you do do that move-in process,  
we would like you to be as efficient as possible so we can  
continue to move more students into their spaces.  
If you are still deciding whether or not you want to come to campus,  
we do have a few spaces  
available and we do need to hear from you as soon as possible because it will  
take us about a week from the date that you tell us that you  
want to come for us to be able to get you a room assignment,  
and then to move forward with,  
giving you the information on a move-in time and date.

Move-in scheduled tests again begin in early January.

We would also like you to consider coming  
as close to the start of the semester as possible.

We will also have required arrival testing for those students in  
the residence halls from the fall semester who  
decided not to go home at all for the break.

If you are physically here in Pullman,  
you'll be receiving contact on how to sign up for that arrival tests,  
even though you never left Pullman.

>> Jill, how many students are going to be in a room,  
in a residence halls?

What will that look like?

>> We are retaining our single occupancy model for this coming semester.

No student will have a physical roommate,  
and we've also limited the number of students per  
physical bathroom to be an average ratio of about four students, two bathrooms.

Again, we've done that for physical distancing reasons in order to help students stay as distant as possible within the community living environment.

We did see this be successful inside of the fall semester.

>> Thanks for clarifying about the restrooms.

I know that was a question that we did see in advance, people were wondering how that was going to work.

You mentioned that there's mandatory arrival testing for students who are choosing to live on campus.

Can you provide a little bit more information about what that mandatory arrival testing is going to look like?

>> Yeah, absolutely. I actually have some slides for this one.

If our AOI Team won't mind helping me out. Thank you so much.

Some more specifics and to let you know too that there are specifics even beyond this that will be available on the WSU websites.

So no need to frantically jot all this information down.

If you are impacted by this information, you will be receiving communication in addition to today's town hall.

This is Pullman specific.

I know we have audience members from all over the system, just bear with me through the Pullman stuff here.

January 4th through 22nd, excluding January 13th,

we will have testing available at

Beasley Coliseum that will be indoor and physically distanced.

WSU will be covering the cost of arrival testing for WSU Pullman students.

You will receive proof that you've completed your test on

your attestation screen that you already complete to access campus services.

All students living in residence halls, as I mentioned,  
must receive that COVID-19 arrival test and all students living in WSU-owned apartments.

We have a number of students that live in WSU,  
month-to-month apartments or I guess not month-to-month but year-by-year apartments.

Those students will also need to test.

For off-campus students who are in the Pullman area.

If you want to access any university service that's on-campus in the spring,  
you also need to take that arrival test.

For example, if you're a person who likes to spend  
time in the university recreation center,  
or you want to access components of study spaces and things like that,  
or if you're taking an in-person class that's been approved,  
you do need to also take that arrival test.

All other students living in Whitman County and especially in Pullman,  
are strongly encouraged to take that COVID-19 arrival test.

We are also introducing a very special off-campus location for  
the January 14th through January 18th time-frame within Adams Mall.

This focus is for students in their fraternity and  
sorority community and those living on College Hill.

I want to give a special thanks to Corporate Point for  
their partnership in allowing us to use the space.

Our community might better know this location as Stubblefields.

If you and Stubbies know each other,  
please know that this will be our testing location for  
the spring semester just for those four days. Next slide please.



We've also made a couple of changes in our diagnostic testing for spring 2021.

Diagnostic testing refers specifically to if you think

you might have been exposed to COVID-19 or you might be experiencing symptoms.

Like this semester, if you're in Pullman we need you to call

Cougar Health Services to ask for guidance on what to do next.

We don't want you to just walk into the health center.

Please do go ahead and call.

You also have the option always to work with your local health care provider.

WSU is committed to covering the cost for

COVID-19 testing for students in their diagnostic space as well.

But we will also do that in conjunction with

your insurance if you're a person who is insured. Next slide.

Then finally, we're going to be having different types

of screening testing this coming spring semester.

Voluntary screening testing will be ongoing and we're

also doing some focus to wastewater testing this spring,

that is for our on-campus residence halls, apartments,

and then we've also partnered with the city of Pullman to

do some wastewater testing in our College Hill Community.

Then based on the information we get from the wastewater testing,

we'll also be able to reach out to students in halls,

apartments and then work with our local landlords

to let folks know that we need them to get tested.

Targeted screening testing may be required for students living on campus and then

strongly encouraged for those that are living in private residences within the community.

Yeah, my slide for me.

That was a very brief overview.

There will be detailed information posted about the dates, the times, the locations of all of the arrival testing on the WSU COVID-19 website.

Again, if you are a student that will be impacted by the need to test, you will receive targeted communication to your WSU email giving you the most up-to-date information as we wrap up December and get into January.

>> Great, there was three takeaways that I got from that, tell me if I'm missing anything.

One thing that I'll note, you didn't mention, but it was in your slide, if a student is experiencing any illness symptom, if they think they've got typical fall cold, the kind of cold they might get every year or if they think their allergies are flaring up, we can't assume that those are just regular allergies or the regular cold.

It could very well be COVID-19.

I know in conversations I've had with Jason Sampson, when students are getting calls from contact tracers to be told that they have tested positive, in some cases, students are shocked because they don't feel like they had any symptoms or they might have had a stuffy nose and really dismissed it as something that they would get every year around this time.

I think that is worth pointing out to anybody, students or members of the community.

If you think you have any kind of symptoms,

the right thing to do is to contact your health care provider.

For our students, that's Cougar Health Services.

The other two things, Jill, that

you mentioned that I'll just reiterate is,

if you are interested in returning to campus,

if you haven't already made arrangements to live on campus

and you think that might be something that would work for you in the spring,

now is the time to call WSU

Housing so that we can make those arrangements and find you a space.

Also if you are already planning to live on campus,

be sure to be looking at your e-mail

because there will be very specific information that you're getting,

have received and will be receiving in the future around arrival and the like.

Did I hit all the high points from your perspective.

>> Yes, absolutely.

I think it's important for our listeners

to note today that Phil and I are not medical professionals.

If you have any questions about your health,

please contact your medical care provider and don't assume that allergies are

allergies that a winter cold might be a winter cold.

I also read anecdotally,

I think the other day that the reviews of

scented candles have taken a dive because folks are

not necessarily having an awareness that

that loss of sense of smell might be an indicator.

Keeping look out for all of those symptoms.

>> Good advice. I agree.

Colleen, I'd like to turn it over to you now,  
we hit the high points of our spring testing plan,  
but might be helpful just to go over what I see as  
the four main pillars of that testing plan.

Then also I'd love to have you talk about the work that you're doing with  
the state of Washington in having  
WSU help meet the request that we provide  
that ultra cold storage that's required for the Pfizer vaccine.

What are we doing with regard to making  
that cold storage available and  
then doing the distribution of the vaccine when the time comes.

>> Sure. Thanks Phil. Tell me where you want to start.

>> Why don't we talk a little bit about  
the four pillars of the testing plan? We'll start with that,  
and I know that we might have a possibility  
of being able to use some of our students to help with some of that testing.  
You can talk about that, that would be great and we can talk about the vaccine.

>> Yeah, sure.

Everything that Jill said holds true  
and is a really good outline of where we're at with respect  
to our advanced planning for testing and  
spring semester and in particular with the focus on January.

What I want to do first is actually acknowledge we  
have a couple of faculty and our scientists with us here this morning,

and we have a great team of faculty,  
actually providing all of the advice in terms of what  
our testing plan looks like and what the frequency of testing will be.

Phil to your question about who will be  
supporting or how are we providing the arrival testing?

A lot of that goes to how much testing will we need and there will  
be a lot of testing in January.

In order to meet that need,  
we think we're going to be able to have our pharmacy students who are going to be able to  
becoming to Whitman County to be providing the actual tests.

I want to acknowledge our dean, Mark Leid,  
who has worked so that all of our pharmacy students are trained to do  
samples for the coronavirus test and they are  
also have been trained to administer vaccines.

So it's a really exciting opportunity for our students to actually be supporting WSU,  
participating in the State response to  
the pandemic and supporting all of our communities.

>> We've been waiting months to hear the words,  
making plans to share the vaccine,  
so certainly music to my ears. I agree with you.

I think it's a terrific opportunity for our pharmacy students  
to get some very real-world experience in both  
conducting the tests of their fellow classmates and then  
ultimately providing the vaccinations so that we can get on with life.

Let's talk a little bit about the vaccine.

I know there's been a lot of conversation in the popular media about somebody's vaccines really requiring ultra cold storage.

[NOISE] Minus 70 or minus 80 degrees Celsius.

Challenge obviously is there aren't many of those ultra cold freezers out there in our communities.

It's not the kind of thing that we would have in our homes and it's either hospitals or research universities typically that have those.

Because we are an R1 research institution and we have locations around the state, we do have those freezers available.

Tell us what we're doing to help the state with the distribution of the vaccine.

>> Sure. Thank you.

Let me say the approach that we're taking to the vaccine is the same approach that we have taken with respect to COVID-19 from the beginning.

We are in a state of emergency and we're a state institution and where the states land grants.

So we are doing everything we can, which started with us bringing our animal diagnostic disease lab online for human testing and now we are working through for a vaccine.

I want to say that because we're going to also work with the state as we've worked toward reopening.

I want to echo what Jill said earlier.

This is a system wide endeavor, but we're going to talk primarily about the Spokane and Pullman campuses.

With respect to the first step of vaccine is actually receipt, storage, and then supporting local public health for distribution.

We are working with all of our campuses to reach out to local public health

for the need for ultra cold storage as a research institution, we have a lot.

It is a very interesting learning curve in terms of what communities actually have.

Now, I will say from the Spokane and Pullman perspective,

that is a very integrated partnership that we have.

Spokane Regional Health District is the lead entity for Region 9.

So we have reached out to Spokane Regional Health District,

well, we know that we have enough that we

can support all of Region 9 and we would look

forward to partnering with Spokane Regional Health with those counties in

the Region 9 Health District from the Department of Health.

Where Whitman County perspective,

Whitman County Public Health,

we are working to support them.

They are leading a collaborative community collaborative effort.

We have been submitting jointly with them to the Department of Health and

working with them jointly as we work with Department of Health.

There will be vaccines distributed in the state of Washington next week.

We anticipate in the first round probably doing very little receipt and

storage because the vaccine is going to come

out and then it's going to go out so quickly.

I want to make sure to acknowledge Ellen Taylor with student affairs and

who has been leading effort from Cougar Health Services perspective.

Dr. Guy Palmer, who is our Senior Director for Global Health for the WSU System,

and Shawn Ringo with Environmental Health and Safety,

who has been helping us operationalize and partner with

Whitman County Public Health and also with

our Spokane Campus and Spokane Regional Health.

I think the thing to note is that the vaccine is going to come in waves,

so next week is a really momentous week. It's going to be

the first wave and then we're going to continue this process as

we continue arrival testing and as we continue with

all of our public health protocols over a period of months.

It will be a moment of complex coordinating and collaborating,

and I think that will really allow us to fulfill our land-grant mission in the state.

>> Colleen, I agree.

As a land-grant university,

we exist to provide service to the people of the state of Washington.

I think it's one more example of WC really trying

to lean into that land-grant mission by making cold storage available,

and as you mentioned,

standing up the lab to do human samples that is now being able to test

samples not only for Washington state but

for other communities on the Eastern half of the state.

Colleen, you mentioned several times that we do have a testing plan that's being

worked on for Spokane and I'd like to maybe to turn it over to Dr. DeWald. Daryll,

if you could give us a preview of what that plan looks like.

I know it's not been complete yet.

We're putting the final touches on it,

but share with us what is the plan for Spokane and why do we need

a specific plan for those students who are [NOISE] on the health science campus.

>> Thanks Phil, and I appreciate what Colleen introduced,



and what Jill said so I'm going to try to add to that.

I will give some specifics about our Spokane testing plan,

but I wanted to give a shout out to

our faculty and staff who worked so hard during this pandemic.

They've kept us moving forward.

They served the students so well.

The students, we really want to serve you in

the most effective way to help you complete your programs and to move forward,

so thanks to the faculty and staff for doing that.

First, our health sciences are committed to

the safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Next, we want to help you complete your programs.

We want to help you do your research that is so important to our state.

I'm going to describe a highly coordinated and collaborative testing program that links

to what we're doing in Pullman and relies upon those partnerships,

including the partnership with Insight and our One Health Diagnostics Lab.

It relies on the coordination with different institutions including

Eastern Washington University and

the University of Washington who have students coming onto our campuses,

and we're helping support their program,

so there's three important parts to our testing program.

But before I begin,

I just want to remind folks,

if you are symptomatic please reach out to your healthcare provider,

be tested if you have cold or flu symptoms.

Back to our testing program, so we will,  
like Pullman, have a arrival testing that is required for  
asymptomatic students who plan to enter the campus for their coursework,  
their skills development, or to study.

Next for asymptomatic faculty and staff  
who are working in clinical environments who enter the Spokane campus,  
you will be required to have arrival testing.

This we'll be testing that is done using our Insight Diagnostics One Health Laboratory.

We will do the logistics for you,  
but we want you to be tested prior to you coming onto campus.

Last category is asymptomatic students,  
faculty and staff who are conducting human subject research in clinical environments,  
that's required arrival testing.

Then we will have periodic testing of  
the same groupings of individuals through the semester,  
we'll provide more details on that.

But also linked to that Phil,  
we're going to have a voluntary screening testing program,  
where asymptomatic students, faculty and staff who are working in clinical environments.

Those students who need  
certification testing so they can go into the clinical environment,  
and we will be providing voluntary testing for asymptomatic faculty and  
staff who enter our campus and those who are affiliated with our campus.

What we're trying to achieve as a safer program as possible,  
we have coordinated with the University of Washington and their students,  
and the Eastern Washington University will also be complying with our testing program.

That gives you a sense of what we're trying to do,  
but we're also relying on the information that we get for our voluntary testing to  
make decisions in the spring semester Phil, so this will be done in real-time.

Remember arrival testing, periodic testing, and voluntary testing.

Phil, do you have any questions about that?

>> Great. Thank you, Daryll. That hits the three of  
the four pillars that we were talking about earlier,  
and then the last of course is something you mentioned at the beginning,  
which is if you have any symptoms,  
you need to get that diagnostic test to make sure that you are not ill. Colleen,  
was there anything you wanted to add before we move on to the next topic?

>> I was just going to say one thing about vaccines.

For our counties that are more rural and have limited access to healthcare,  
having the vaccine early that will go to frontline healthcare workers,  
including our students who will be supporting the effort.

For those of us who are working in a healthcare setting,  
the implications for the vaccine can have  
a tremendously positive impact on  
access to healthcare and the stress of the healthcare system,  
and so that is a really important reason why we are supportive of  
this vaccine effort in the state of Washington and  
particular in Eastern Washington and Region 9.

To your point Phil earlier about our land-grant mission this is squarely in that place,  
and so we're looking forward to this process.

>> Great. Thank you, Colleen. I'm going to ask

our subject matter experts who are monitoring the chat  
if you can include a link to our spring testing plan that would be helpful.

It is available on the web for anyone who wants to take a look at it.

It provides quite a bit of detailed information,

and Daryll I know that you will be

posting later in the week the details of the Spokane plan as well.

Folks who are interested in looking for those simply go to

wsu.edu and type into the search box,

you should be able to find that if we're not

able to make that available in the chat right away.

Now I'd like to pivot a little bit.

We've talked about looking forward about

what WSU is going to do in advance of spring semester,

I'd like to focus a little bit on some research

that WSU faculty members have been doing in this area.

I'm going to start with Dr. Santanu Bose.

Dr. Bose, I know that you've been really devoting most of your career to doing

research into development of therapeutics for pandemics in general,

and the work you're doing is in particular

has potential for helping address the issues around COVID-19.

I'd love to have you tell us a little bit more about that work.

I know that you discovered a particular protein the A9 protein that I mentioned

earlier, is being licensed by

a pharmaceutical company that hopes to bring into clinical trials.

The work that you're doing, I think sounds very promising,

and I'd love if you'll be able to share

some more information about that with us, if you could.

>> Thank you, Phil for giving me an opportunity to discuss about

our research which is evolving

around developing therapeutics for the current and future pandemic.

What are these zoonotic respiratory viruses

like influenza and coronaviruses that causes pandemic?

One of the problem that we face with these viruses is that the new strands can

arise due to mutations or them jumping from animal or birds.

As an example, I'm showing you here that viruses like influenza or coronaviruses,

they can jump from an animal species like pigs or dogs,

or in case of coronaviruses they can jump from camel, bats to humans.

If that happens, there are potential for the coronaviruses,

or influenza viruses to cause pandemic.

These are some of the numbers of the past pandemic and the present pandemic too.

Influenza A virus have already killed

almost more than 20 million people due to some other pandemics which are listed here.

As you know, the current coronavirus pandemic,

which is caused by SARS-CoV-2,

and the name of the disease is COVID-19,

it has already killed 1.6 million people in the world.

How does these viruses cause infection?

Once you inhale respiratory viruses like

SARS-CoV-2 or flu or any of the future pandemics trends that may arise.

It goes through your trachea,

and then they've landed up into the lungs.

When it's in the lung it replicates,  
and what it creates is  
exaggerated lung inflammation which leads to develop enough pneumonia,  
which is nothing but massive inflammation in the lung.

Due to the pneumonia you have lung tissue damage,  
you have fluid accumulation which is also known as edema formation,  
and airway obstructions which leads to death.

What are the problems with the pandemic potential viruses like flu and coronaviruses?

As I have told you earlier that new strands can arise anytime due to  
mutations or jumping from animal birds to humans,  
and it's difficult to predict we can be hit with  
another pandemic tomorrow or next week or after 20 years, you never know.

What is the problem that we're facing with this pandemic strands?

For example, just imagine that this is  
the current coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 and it's using a sword to kill us.  
Let's say we are developing vaccine for the sword and  
also therapeutics for these sword so we can  
counteract the infection and then we can survive.

But let's say in the near future new coronaviruses comes up in the population,  
but instead of using a sword it's using a spear or it's using a bow and arrow.

In that case, the therapeutics and vaccines that we have used here will not be  
useful to counteract the spear or the bows and  
arrows because it's completely different strain of viruses.

In that case again,  
we are back to the drawing board because we have to again make the vaccine,  
as you know it takes more than a year to make a vaccine,

and within that time-frame millions of people may die.

In that case, what is our alternative?

The alternative is that we can focus on

developing therapeutics which is not geared to the virus but towards the host.

For example, so instead of developing some agent against the sword,

what happens if we all wear an armor as shown here?

In that case, we are not only protected against the sword but also against the spear,

and the bow and arrow.

Basically we are shielded against the current pandemic trend and

also against the future pandemic trend that may arise.

The way we can do that is by developing a non-viral host-directed therapeutics.

In that case, we

can use a host-derived factor to control respiratory virus-associated pneumonia.

For example, a couple of years back,

we discovered this protein called S100A9 protein or A9 which

causes lung inflammation during virus infection and it was patented by WSU at that time.

The whole idea was that if we can block

the function of this A9 protein by using an antibody,

then we can block inflammation.

We have shown that the A9 antibody can reduce inflammation in flu-infected mice lungs,

and also it can improve survival of flu-infected mice,

and other groups after we patented and

published our studies have shown similar result with other respiratory viruses,

and also they have shown that A9 antibody can reduce thrombosis.

Most importantly, a lot of papers which are coming out which is

showing that A9 protein is detected in COVID-19 patient and most importantly, it was detected in mildly ill and critically ill COVID-19 patients who are in the ICU and also who are on ventilators.

Our goal is to develop a humanized monoclonal A9 antibody so that we can give it to humans who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 or any of the other future pandemic strains that may arise, which can block pneumonia, and if we can block pneumonia, we can reduce mortality and also we can reduce the disease burden and severity.

The A9 technology that I already talked about was patented and it was recently licensed to a Canadian biotech pharmaceutical company for developing it as an anti-COVID19 therapeutics.

The efficacy of the humanized anti-A9 monoclonal antibody is being tested and developed for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

We are also conducting current research with SARS-CoV-2 in the BSL-3 facility.

Our goal is to develop and identify other cross-species therapeutics for future pandemic which can be used against SARS-CoV-2 and other pandemic viruses.

This is our picture of our work that is going on in WSU's BSL-3 facility.

It's spearheaded by a postdoc in my lab, Dr. Kim Chiok.

Also, she's helped by

Dr. Tanya Miura who is an associate professor from University of Idaho.

As you can see, we have to wear protective gear, like a specialized PPE when working with the viruses like SARS-Cov-2, and I could tell you it's not very comfortable wearing this and working in the lab like this.



So by acknowledgment, I want to acknowledge

everybody who is listed here in this slide but most importantly,

Dr. Kim Chiok and Dr. Tanya Miura,

who is spearheading the SARS-Cov-2 project in WSU.

Also, Dr. Senthil Natesan who is an assistant professor at WSU College of Pharmacy

for molecular dynamics studies developing therapeutics for SARS-CoV-2,

and WSU Paul Allen School for giving us an opportunity of using their BSL-3 facility,

and not the least,

I also want to thank the funding which is from

National Institutes of Health and Washington Research Foundation. Thank you.

>> Great. Thank you, Dr. Bose.

I appreciate you sharing that information and thank you to you and

all your fellow researchers for the work that you're doing.

I think that for us to be able to deal with

current and future outbreaks like this, we need to, as you said,

not only focus on the individual virus but also come up with therapies that

can be used against a variety of different potential infectious agents,

so I appreciate that.

I'd like to turn now to Dr. Sara Waters from our Vancouver campus.

Dr. Waters, you've been doing some research on an alarming,

I think, increase in the number of incidents of

discrimination against Asians and Asian-Americans and you've been

able to show that there is a link between

those increased acts of discrimination and

impacting the physical health of those individuals.

So could you talk to us a little bit about what you found in your research?

>> Yes. Thank you,

first of all, for letting us have this opportunity to share this work,

and also the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

at WSU Vancouver was able to provide funding to support this work.

Suyeon Lee, who's a prevention science graduate student of mine,

we really worked closely together on this project because we're interested in

how these experiences of discrimination are related to physical and mental health.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit,

we were hearing racist terms used to describe the virus.

In the news and in the media,

we were hearing about reports of attacks against Asian-Americans all across the country.

Between March and May of 2020,

there was one non-profit organization compiled

almost 2,000 reports of anti-Asian discrimination.

So it would be important to understand how

these kinds of events might be impacting Asian-Americans' health.

We used an online platform so we were able to reach

over 400 Asian and Asian-American people living in the United States,

and we had a set of questionnaires we asked them to complete.

They told us about their experiences of anti-Asian discrimination and

microaggressions as well as their symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Physical symptoms, so things like headaches and stomach pains,

as well as sleep problems that they had been experiencing.

We asked them, not only what's going on right now,

but if you think about,

just a few months ago,

before the pandemic, have these things increased or decreased or are they the same?

About a third of the people that we contacted said that they

definitely experienced more anti-Asian discrimination since the pandemic began.

Between 40 and 50 percent of the people that we contacted had

experienced more symptoms of anxiety and depression since the pandemic began,

so we saw a consistent with what other reports across the country were showing,

that this is really affecting folks all over.

We also saw that the more experiences of

discrimination or racism that people had experienced,

the more mental and physical health problems they reported,

and that was the same story across all four of our health outcomes.

More anxiety, more depression,

more of these physical ailments,

and more sleep problems as folks had experienced

more discrimination and anti-Asian racism.

We also asked people to tell us,

in their own words,

about a specific personal experience of

discrimination that they had faced since the pandemic began,

and we got hundreds and hundreds of stories.

Many folks talked about how they had been treated with suspicion or treated with disgust

by neighbors when they were out walking in

their community or while shopping in a grocery store,

people moved away from them,

people didn't want to serve them or help them.

We also heard stories of verbal assaults and even physical attack happening.

We also got a lot of stories about folks who had shared that they had also been hearing racist terms used to describe the virus or posted on social media, and so we want to highlight that it's really important to understand these indirect experiences of discrimination.

So maybe it didn't happen to my face, but I'm seeing it in my social world or on the news, and it's really impacting me in that way as well.

Now, sometimes when we look at discrimination and health, we see things like social support.

So having really high-quality relationships with our families, our friends, our partners can be a protection against the effect of that discrimination on health.

We looked at that too and we found that there was a protective factor of these high-quality relationships for depression specifically, but not for anxiety, physical ailments, and sleep problems.

Now, we didn't see evidence that people felt like they had less support.

They had to find different ways to get their social support with social distancing, but not necessarily less so.

So I think it's really important to think about other things that folks can do or that we can offer people to help support their health during this time, and really just that this work is a call to action that we come together in our WSU community and in the other communities that we live, especially as we're hopefully transitioning into the end of the pandemic,

and that we're going to be reuniting in different communities physically, in person, that we acknowledge and address the anti-Asian discrimination that has surged during this difficult time.

>> Thanks, Dr. Waters I appreciate you sharing that information with us.

I'm going to give a bit of a preview for our next town hall in January.

As I mentioned, we want to focus on providing practical advice to caregivers.

Dr. Waters has also done some research looking at what happens when a parent tries to hide their anxiety from their children.

If a child asks a parent what's wrong and parent says,

"Everything's fine, don't worry about it."

We may think we're great actors.

The reality is our young children do know when we're not being truthful about that and so

Dr. Waters will join us in January, talk about the research that she has conducted in that area and help give us some advice on how to have healthy, frank, open conversations with our children so they understand what kinds of issues parents are dealing with.

I encourage you to join us for that as well.

Dr. Waters, thank you for your time.

I'd like to move on now, as we get close to the top of the hour to Jason Sampson.

Jason, I know there has been a change in the timeline around quarantine information, I'd like to have you talk a little bit about that.

Also just give us a brief update on where we

are on the Pullman Campus with regard to infection rates if you could.

>> Thank you, Phil. Recently the CDC

came out with some guidance change and I think it's caused a lot of confusion.

Within the state and definitely locally.

Right now, 14 days is still the preferred quarantine length time for close contacts.

They've also listed two other time frames a 10-day,

without symptoms and seven days with a test,

and without those symptoms.

Those are both related with

hardships and aren't necessarily immediately adopted.

WSU is currently working with the Whitman County Health Department

because in order for those timelines to actually change,

our Whitman County Health Department needs to adopt them.

Then WSU is also going to look at them and see how we're

going to use that regarding employees returning to campus,

students out of the isolation sequester,

and anything along that line because we really want to make sure we're not making

decisions that put our community at a whole, in further risk.

There are some really good reasons for those timelines switches.

We want to make sure we're not utilizing some of

those testing resources we have inappropriately and making sure everybody can get them.

We want to make sure we keep those classrooms and

other event type areas that the students will be socializing and that's very safe.

Again, we'll be actually talking over the next few days then making

sure our community understands how WSU will approach that time change.

The other part is a snapshot of where WSU is currently at.

I think last time we spoke,  
we were really worried about Thanksgiving having the spiking cases locally.  
The governor recently just come out with  
that guidance to not travel out of state and if you  
do, isolate 14 days before going back to your normal routine.  
Well, I'm glad to report right now,  
we did not see that Thanksgiving Day spike.  
We currently only have had 78 cases over the last two weeks.  
That is actually down from that two weeks prior to Thanksgiving.  
That even includes all those tests those students did  
to safely go home to see their families.  
The county currently is at 214 over that same two weeks.  
When we talked last time,  
there are two-week total or per 100,000 which is a new metric everybody is looking at.  
With 683, it was actually above  
the chart that actually is available in the Whitman County website.  
We are actually now down as it states to down to 451.  
That's actually a significant reduction.  
I want to thank everybody for making those good decisions during that Thanksgiving break.  
But we're not to the finish line yet.  
So we need to continue that same behavior as we approach Christmas and New Year.  
Hang in there, we're getting close especially with  
all this great exciting news about a vaccine.  
I wish that same great news was throughout the rest of the state,  
and even locally in some of our regions.

Why we are slowing down,

Spokane right now is just having a tremendous amount of cases.

Also Nez Perce right now is actually surpassed Whitman County for the number of cases.

Obviously our spike in August put us ahead of them in that metric,

they have definitely surpassed us.

So while Whitman County is doing well,

some of these other counties aren't, in fact,

we have overwhelmed the public health districts so much right now.

They are not actually doing contact tracing.

They're actually informing the person that tested positive,

and then having them reach out to those people.

So EHS here, at WSU,

is there to answer any questions for students,

or individuals who think they are close contacts to make sure we can reduce some of

that transmission as much as possible and

help you and your family navigate through these times.

But right now, I want you to just commend you on

reducing the spike that we thought was going to happen after Thanksgiving.

I want you to continue those great behaviors.

>> Jason, you make a really good point.

Despite all the conversation we've been having about the coming of a vaccine,

now is not the time to let down our guard.

We do need to maintain the mask wearing,

the physical distancing, washing of hands,

making sure we're avoiding groups of people until we've been able to

have that vaccine spread widely throughout the entire population.



That's going to be quite a while yet.

This the last big push.

We need to make sure we stay vigilant,  
and wear those masks until everybody's had a chance to receive the vaccine.  
So thanks for sharing that.

President Schulz, we're at the top of the hour.

Any closing remarks you'd want to make before we before we sign off?

>> Phil, thank you so much.

For everybody who joined us today,  
during the town hall, Thank you.

We appreciate the questions and keep sending  
those in and we're going to do the best that we can to answer those.

I appreciate the flexibility of my colleagues.

The one thing we've learned through COVID-19,  
is when we think we can predict where things are going to be in a month,  
that's never quite there.

Let me just again,  
reiterate the same things we've said all along.

Please be, extraordinarily careful during the holiday season,  
make sure you wash your hands,  
wear a mask, keep distant,  
and above all, we look forward to seeing our students,  
faculty and staff, and people who are returning to our campus communities in January.

Until then, be safe and Go Cougs.

>> Great. Thanks, President Schulz.

Just a quick reminder.

Our 15th town hall,

is going to be scheduled for Thursday,

January 28th at 11:00 AM.

Keep on the lookout for that.

With that, I want to extend a thank you to all of our panelists.

I appreciate you spending your time with us.

Also want to thank the subject matter experts who have been monitoring the chat for us.

Then finally, I want to thank all of you for joining us.

We appreciate this opportunity to be able to talk directly

with folks about this very serious subjects.

We appreciate you taking the hour.

With that, enjoy the rest of your week,

and as the president said, Go Cougs.