



OUR PLAN FOR THE FALL SEMESTER

Classes to begin Aug. 10 and end before Thanksgiving

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

This has been a year unlike any other in higher education and our Gannon University community is about to be reunited but with another twist. **We intend to open our Erie and Ruskin campuses earlier than usual – classes will start Aug. 10 for most students – so we can complete the semester before Thanksgiving.**

Our announcement coincides with Florida moving to “Phase II” and in anticipation of Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf upgrading Erie County’s status from “yellow” to “green” in coming days. “Phase II” and the “green” status permits the operating of institutions, businesses and universities like ours with fewer limitations than would be allowed in “yellow.”

COVID-19 is still with us.

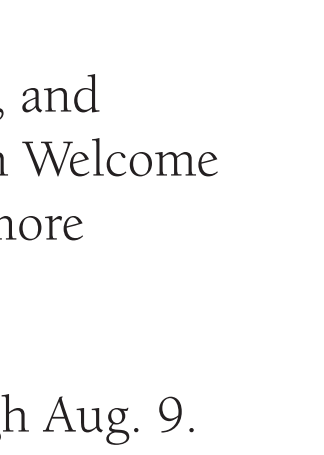
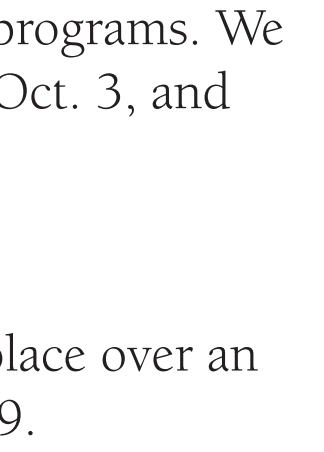
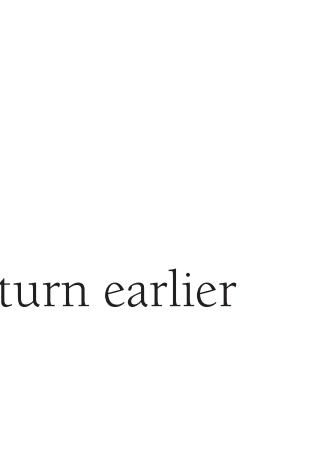
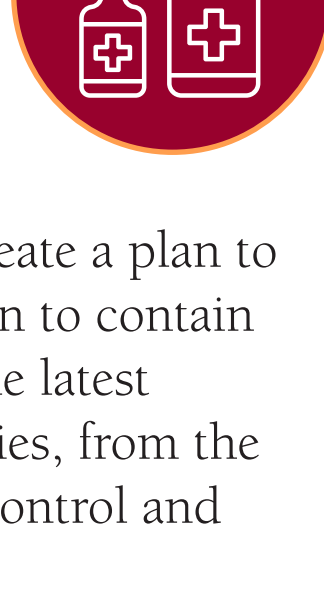
Recognizing that reality, we have been working for several weeks to develop a reopening plan with the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff as our top priority. We have also worked to create a plan that provides the best possible environment and opportunity for academic continuity for our students.

We all know how disruptive it was to close campus on March 18 and shift all teaching to alternative delivery models. Nonetheless, we are proud of how well – and how fast – our students and faculty adjusted and are ready to get started with the new year. We have decided to rework and shift the fall semester forward to Aug. 10 to reduce the chances of our community members inadvertently carrying the coronavirus back to campus after a fall or Thanksgiving break.

We can’t wait to have our students, faculty and staff back safely on campus. Be ready, the campus you will return to will look and operate differently from the one you left.

Here are some key changes:

- Masks will be required, and thermal scanners or thermometers will be used to scan students/faculty/staff temperatures daily for them to be cleared to come on campus.
- Social Distancing will be enforced on campus. You will notice new signage across campus that emphasizes keeping six feet apart.
- Class sizes may be smaller and some class times may change.
- Unless otherwise noted, classes will be offered in person with remote delivery options, to accommodate students and faculty who have health risks or who become sick and are isolating.
- Residence halls will be following best practices and social distancing guidelines, and a block of rooms has been set aside for students who would require isolation should they test positive for COVID-19.
- There will be increased cleaning and readily available sanitizer campus-wide and a much-stronger emphasis on personal hygiene.
- Dining services will be adjusted following safety guidelines and service approaches with more to-go options.



As we developed this plan, we broke our effort into several pieces – create a plan to re-open; create a plan to monitor and detect infections; and have a plan to contain any possible outbreak. Here is where we stand as of today, based on the latest guidance from the health departments in Erie and Hillsborough counties, from the states of Pennsylvania and Florida, and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

CAMPUS REOPENING DATE

The first day of classes in Ruskin and Erie will be Aug. 10, 2020.

However, students in a few health programs in Erie and Ruskin will return earlier than Aug. 10 to complete program specific requirements.

The first day of Gannon Online will be Aug. 17 for our online degree programs. We will have two seven-week online sessions – Fall Session 1, Aug. 17 to Oct. 3, and Fall Session 2, Oct. 5 to Nov. 21.

STUDENT MOVE-IN

For Gannon’s Erie campus, move-in for residential students will take place over an extended period beginning Tuesday, Aug. 4, and ending Sunday, Aug. 9.

Move-in for new, first-year students will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 4, and Wednesday, Aug. 5. Move-in will be immediately followed by Gannon Welcome Week, which is required for all new students. New students can find more information at www.gannon.edu/accepted.

Move-in for returning students will primarily take place Aug. 6 through Aug. 9.

All residents will receive specific instructions on how to join our community on move-in days using social distancing guidelines.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR STUDENTS

Students unable to return to campus for early opening due to unavoidable and/or unforeseen circumstances should contact the Office of Residence Life or the Office of Commuter Life.

For students who have underlying health issues, are sick or quarantined during the semester, or otherwise have concerns about on-campus activities, remote delivery instruction may be available. Please contact the Academic Advising Center.

EMPLOYEE RETURN DATES

Most employees have continued to work remotely since March. Some of our employees in Ruskin will be returning to our Florida campus immediately to prepare for the first students, who will begin June 29.

Based on the approval date of Erie County’s transition to “green” status, we intend to cycle some employees back to our Erie campus beginning July 1 so the university is fully operational by the time students start arriving in late July.

However, one of our guiding principles this summer and through the new academic year will be to keep campus population density as low as possible. To that end, we will phase the return of our workforce in Erie. Some employees might continue to work remotely well into fall.

Supervisors will begin notifying their employees of their expected return dates on June 19.

ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

For students: Students who are sick should not attend in-person class or attend in-person activities. The academic class attendance policy will be relaxed for the 2020-2021 year. Students should notify their faculty if they will miss an in-person session they were expected to attend.

For employees: Faculty, staff and student workers who are sick (i.e. running a fever or exhibiting COVID-19-related symptoms) should not report to work. They should notify their immediate supervisor of their planned absence.

REQUESTS FOR ALTERNATE LEARNING AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

For students: Students requesting alternate learning arrangements for conditions deemed a higher risk for COVID-19 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or other special circumstances, should make such a request through the Academic Advising Center.

For employees: Workers who are asked to return to campus but would like to inquire about a different work arrangement or assignment should reach out to their supervisor and Human Resources.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Class schedules and delivery will be arranged to ensure social distancing, including adjusting locations on campus to rooms with larger capacity, limiting section sizes and use of alternative delivery formats.

Classrooms and laboratories, as well as workspaces, are being reconfigured as necessary for physical distancing (such as the placement of desks, tables and chairs to be six feet apart).

Updated signage will be placed in classrooms and laboratories to indicate each room’s capacity.

Some class times may be adjusted in the master schedule, prior to the start of the semester, to reduce density in each academic building. These changes, which we expect will be minor, will be communicated to the affected students in advance of the re-start of school.

Student advisers will be doing outreach over the summer as needed to communicate with each student. Please reach out to each other to ensure that contact and a smooth transition to campus.

FACE COVERINGS

The university will provide face coverings to every student, faculty and staff member. For students living in on-campus housing, face coverings will be distributed as part of move-in. The university will ensure that commuters and students residing in off-campus housing, faculty and staff also receive face coverings prior to or upon their return to campus. Instructions for these individuals will be sent later in the summer.

Students, and every community member and visitor, will be required to wear face coverings while in class, conducting business on campus, and in shared common spaces.

Employees, faculty, staff and student workers, will not have to wear face coverings when working independently in their offices. Employees in common areas and shared/meeting spaces will be required to wear face coverings.

Face coverings will not be required outside; however, they will be required anywhere that appropriate physical distancing is not possible. Each member of our community will have the responsibility to monitor and engage each other to support the face covering requirement. Formal monitoring will be the role of the appropriate university division, as well as kindness and/or office. Individuals are asked to exercise social responsibility, as well as kindness and respect to the face covering requirement. If you encounter students, faculty, and staff who are not wearing face coverings, be mindful that there could be a compelling reason. If you should have difficulty hearing or understanding others in conversation with a face mask, please be patient and kind as you work together to effectively communicate continuing to maintain social distancing.

SCREENING, TESTING, ISOLATION, TRACING

Another change to the campus rhythm will be our screening/testing/isolation/contact tracing program. This is going to change the start of everyone’s day. Here is how it will work, based on our current plan. Please understand that parts of this plan could change based on what we learn over the next few weeks.

Screening: Each student, faculty and staff member in Ruskin and Erie will be required to complete a wellness check questionnaire via an app or on paper that will ask if you’re having any symptoms of COVID-19, if you’ve been around anyone with COVID-19, or if you recently visited a place with a high number of cases of COVID-19. On arrival at campus, all students, faculty and staff will also have a temperature screening via thermal imaging or no-touch thermometers. Anyone with a fever higher than 100.4 degrees will not be permitted to attend class or stay at work.

Testing: Testing will be required for those showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and those who have had exposure risks. Tests will also be made available to those who request one.

Isolation: Those awaiting test results will be asked to quarantine. On-campus students will be quarantined in their residence hall or allowed to return to their home based upon their preference. Off-campus students will quarantine at their residence or home. Employees will also quarantine at home. A wing of one of our residence halls has been reserved to support students who test positive for COVID-19.

Contact tracing: The university is creating protocols as well as an on-campus team to handle contact tracing in concert with the health departments of Erie and Hillsborough counties to locate those who might have been exposed to any positive cases on campus.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, REPORTING AND APPROVALS.

The university’s daily screening and monitoring process will include travel restrictions, monitoring and approvals. Travel restrictions will include travel by faculty, staff or students for university business to hotspots. Prior approval will be required and reporting upon return should such travel be permitted.

A VP or her or his designee must approve all conference, business or recruiting trips. Each of these trips will also be reviewed by Health Services.

Destinations for Gannon-sanctioned travel programs, including ABST, TRAVEL and GIFT trips, will be reviewed and approvals considered based on traveler safety, disease prevalence and access to health care.

We will tightly monitor disease progression in countries where our students are studying abroad and will recall those students on guidance of the State Department.

VISITOR POLICY

To reduce the risk to our colleagues, we will be limiting visitors to campus. Wherever possible, vendors should do their work remotely.

Visitors to residence halls will be restricted, particularly for non-Gannon students. All visitors will be required to check-in upon arrival to allow contact tracing should that become necessary.

EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

Major events and large gatherings will be altered and/or in-person participation restricted to ensure any and all gathering-size limitations are followed. Current maximum gathering size is 250 with social distancing for the “green” phase in Pennsylvania. Decisions regarding specific activities will be made by individual divisions, departments and offices with the approval of the divisional President’s Leadership Team member, who will be responsible for ensuring all state requirements and federal guidelines are followed.

We are continuing to plan for our commencements in Ruskin on Aug. 30 and in Erie on Oct. 4 as part of Homecoming and Family Weekend. We continue to await further guidance from Florida and Pennsylvania. Planning for these 2020 Commencement activities will occur over the coming months and may look different based on various requirements and guidelines from government and health officials.

UPDATED ACADEMIC CALENDAR

An updated academic calendar is available to reflect an early opening with the below adjustments and respective dates.

Welcome week: Begins Aug. 4.

First Day of Classes: Aug. 10, 2020.

Fall Break: There will NOT be a fall break.

Last Day of Classes: Nov. 16, 2020.

Finals Week: Final exams will be administered across five days from Nov. 18 through Nov. 24, 2020 (there will not be testing on Saturday or Sunday).

Winter Commencement: Winter Commencement will be held in accordance with state requirements and federal guidelines on Nov. 21. Planning for Winter Commencement activities will occur over the coming months and may look different based on various requirements and guidelines from government and health officials.

FINANCIAL AID

We recognize the economic distress many of our students and their families have sustained this year. If your personal circumstances have changed, you should contact our Financial Aid office at 814-871-7337 or financialaid@gannon.edu.

The university received \$1.3 million from the government in April and the university forwarded most of this support immediately to full-time undergraduate and graduate students who filled out their FAFSA and therefore could be considered for these funds. Pursuant to language in the CARES Act, international students, and others not eligible for Title IV funding, could not receive these payouts.

Recognizing that there might be some students with extenuating circumstances, a small portion of the federal dollars was held in reserve to be used along with university-funded aid to help resolve special situations over the next couple of months. Students have responded to that opportunity and those still in need are encouraged to reach out to our Financial Aid office if they wish to request consideration for these additional funds.

ATHLETICS

We look forward to another successful athletic season. We will be sending student-athlete communications throughout the summer.

STAY IN TOUCH

Thank you for your flexibility and persistence in this ever-evolving situation. We will continue to keep everyone informed as events unfold. Continue to visit <https://update.gannon.edu> for our latest decisions and for resources to assist you.

If you have a question or a comment, you can submit it at <https://www.gannon.edu/Questions-or-Comments/>.

In Peace,

Keith Taylor, Ph.D.
President
Gannon University

