As the University plans for the Fall 2020 semester, we are doing so with the awareness that we are not only amidst a public health pandemic, but we also face growing social unrest nationwide that is influencing our academic planning.

Howard University continues to monitor the (COVID-19) pandemic and is doing our part to help flatten the curve of the rate of infection, while maintaining services required to deliver an exceptional education to our students and conduct critical research in the safest manner.

We are also planning cognizant of the protests taking place around the country against the killings of several African-Americans, and systemic racism that plagues many social institutions.
Planning

• The University's Fall 2020 re-opening plan is the product of broad discussions held among the members of the President’s Fall Re-opening Taskforce, as well as 13 Fall 2020 Preparation Sub-Committees, with representation from more than 150 students, faculty, staff, local community leaders, and in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and federal government agencies, as well as local government.

• Further, the University surveyed students, faculty and staff to glean their opinions on various parts of the University’s operations for the fall. Our community’s collective voices are represented in the University’s plan.
Planning

• We are also aware of the unique responsibility of Howard University from our mission to “provide an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with emphasis on educational opportunities for Black students.” A recent survey of returning students highlighted student preferences with regards to offering both online and face to face choices.
Guiding Principles

The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and community are of paramount importance as we consider any decisions regarding the Fall semester, and future programming.

The framework of all decisions will be data-informed, based upon guidance from the CDC, Department of Health, and public health officials.

Howard University will continue to deliver an exceptional education and optimal services, within the unavoidable constraints of the COVID-19 response.

Howard University will be transparent when communicating to our entire University body and our community.
Phase II, and III (CDC)

**Phase II**
- To move to phase two, states would have to show a new 14-day period of reduced cases, testing and positive test results. In phase two, vulnerable people continue to remain home and teleworking is encouraged. **Schools, including Universities, could re-open.** Gatherings of 50 people or less would be permitted and non-essential travel could resume. Restaurants, gyms and bars could open under social distancing requirements.

**Phase III**
- To move to phase three, states would again have to show confirmed cases continue to decline over a 14-day period. In phase three, vulnerable people can return to public interactions under social distancing requirements. Restrictions on workplaces would be removed. Larger venues could open with physical distancing and sanitation protocols.
Academic Model

- We are planning for a hybrid academic model this Fall where some students and faculty will be in the classroom and some will not.

- Specific arrangements will be informed based upon the academic discipline and course content, as well as risk to faculty, staff and students regarding underlying medical conditions or concerns over transmission.

- We understand that some members of the Howard University community will not be comfortable engaging in face to face instruction or a residential campus environment this fall due to underlying medical conditions or a concern over transmission to friends or family members.

- To the extent possible, deans and department chairs will discuss with faculty and provide flexibility regarding course instructional format and teaching responsibilities.

- Staff supervisors will meet with staff to provide flexibility regarding work options, whenever possible. Academic advisors will consult with students to design plans to maximize learning opportunities. Students who prefer to enroll only in fully online courses may do so but may not have access to the same courses included in their original plans of study, if these courses are in-person or a blend of in-person and online.
Undergraduate Program Specific

• The guidance regarding classroom management and scheduling is primarily specific to our undergraduate programs. Due to accreditation and other program specific requirements, graduate and professional programs may have differences in their academic calendars, clinical requirements and expectations, and course options.
Personal Protective Equipment

• All students, faculty and staff must present a negative COVID-19 test within 7 days of return to campus. We will also be setting up a comprehensive COVID-19 testing process on campus.

• In accordance with CDC guidance, Howard University will require that all members of the University community and our visitors employ the following social distancing guidelines:

• Keep at least six feet between yourself and another person in all public places and inside all buildings.

• Avoid close contact with others.

• Face masks or face coverings must be worn by everyone on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common workspaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.).

• Remain at home, or in a residence hall room, if you have a fever or other symptoms associated with COVID-19.

• As part of DC’s Phase 2 guidance, the University will operate at 25% building capacity in office spaces, until local guidance dictates otherwise.
Screening and Retesting

• Re-testing and screening will occur at a frequency determined by health professionals based on health indicators designed to measure the prevalence of the virus on campus or in the geographic region.

• Any student or staff member who has symptoms or has had close contact with someone who has tested positive must get tested, in coordination with Student Health Services (for students) or their primary healthcare provider (for staff).

• Students who have either tested positive, have results pending, or are showing symptoms for COVID-19 should be immediately isolated while ensuring their medical, social, and academic needs are met.

• Staff who have either tested positive, have results pending, or are showing symptoms for COVID-19 must stay home and self-isolate.

• The University Office of Human Resources worked with the University’s health insurance providers to obtain coverage, or preferably, provide free COVID-19 testing, for insured faculty, staff, and students. The incorporation of the COVIOD-19 testing service under insurance coverage will be for a limited time.

• Contact Tracing: The University will collaborate with the DC Department of Health for Contact Tracing.
High Risk Individuals

• The University will prioritize the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff. The University will encourage those who are high risk because of age or a health condition to consult with their health care provider prior to returning to campus if you have any concerns.

• These conditions include;
  • Moderate to severe asthma,
  • Severe obesity (>40 Body Mass Index),
  • Diabetes,
  • Immunocompromised conditions,
  • Sickle Cell Disease,
  • Chronic Kidney Disease, Liver disease, and/or,
  • Serious heart conditions,
  • and other such condition by which the individual has a high risk of severe illness if COVID-19 is contracted.

• Students who are high-risk are advised to choose a remote course schedule. Faculty who are high risk should collaborate with their department chairs and/or deans to determine the feasibility of in-person instruction or offering courses online.
Mental and Emotional Health

- Health services are available through primary care providers, especially to provide emotional support during this period of heightened anxiety. Telephonic or video counseling is available, and you can access this service using most smartphones, tablets and computers with a camera. Employees should contact the Office of Human Resources to learn more about available support, while students may contact the Student Counseling Center for remote support, even during summer months.

- Please utilize Howard University's web resources to learn more about support services, managing stress and enhancing individual resilience during this time.

- No community as large as Howard’s campus can guarantee an environment free of COVID-19, and the measures described in this plan recognize that reality. While much has gone into this effort to protect the Howard community, we trust that all its members — faculty, staff, students and visitors alike — will ultimately take responsibility for their own health and safety and act in a manner that demonstrates respect and consideration for those around them.
Online Training and Testing

- The University will provide online training for the entire campus community prior to our return to campus. Enhanced communication for faculty, students and staff will include physical and digital signage, social media posts, and regular campus notifications.

- Training for students will include a required student participation in an online educational seminar, prior to the start of the fall semester, designed to inform students about the health behaviors expected and required during the fall semester.

- A mandatory virtual orientation that includes, but is not limited to, social distancing, PPE, symptom screening and testing, hygiene and sanitation, and self-quarantining, will be required for faculty, staff and students prior to returning to campus.

- Testing,

- Students are required to complete a COVID-19 test within the seven days prior to arriving on campus, then share results with the Student Health Center. Screening for COVID-19 will be conducted for the entire student population at the start of the semester and an ongoing regimen of regular screening of students, faculty and staff throughout the fall semester will be implemented.

- All faculty and staff will also be required to participate in a baseline COVID-19 test within seven days of return to campus, or at an official COVID-19 testing site.
Residence Life

• The majority of Howard University housing is privatized and is managed by third-party vendors: Corvias and Campus Apartments. The University will work closely with our partners to deliver optimal service and aligned standards of health and safety protocols University-wide.

• Students will be assigned to a combination of single and double rooms. Smaller rooms that we typically use as doubles will serve as singles. No triples or quads will be available.

• Students who have a laboratory, clinical or performance-based requirement will be prioritized for on-campus housing but cannot be guaranteed on-campus housing due to bed availability.

• Howard University prioritizes on-campus housing for freshmen and sophomores and has a limited number of beds for juniors and seniors. The vast majority of our juniors and seniors seek and secure off-campus housing.
Dining Services

- Enhanced take-away service, delivery options, with limited reservation dine-in seats.

- Self-serve buffet-style meals will not be possible.

- Removal of all self-service areas for salad bars and exposed condiment stations.

- Installation of clear plexiglass dividers to separate customers and staff.

- Mandatory use of masks or face coverings and gloves for all staff, with handwashing every 30 minutes.

- Reduction of seating (to 15-20% of current capacity) in all dining facilities in concurrence with the current District guidelines.
Reopen DC Guidelines

• Per District of Columbia Re-Open DC Guidelines and CDC recommendations:

• Limit group size, with social distancing protocols in place, pursuant to DC’s guidance of no more than 10, 50, or 250 people during Phases 1, 2 or 3, respectively.

• Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, in lieu of in-person, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held.

• Large gatherings, such as assemblies and in-person social events, must be canceled in consideration of social distancing requirements and DC’s guidance noted above.

• In-door recreation areas and theater venues, including Cramton Auditorium must stay closed until Phase 2 with an overall limit of 50 people and 250 people in Phases 2 and 3, respectively, maintaining social distancing. Details for chapel services will be shared with the University at a later date.

• The University’s swimming pool must remain closed until Phase 3, subject to capacity and staffing limitations.

• Swimming courses will not be offered this fall. Details will be shared with students via the Office of the Registrar.