

RETURN TO THE HILL

OVERVIEW



MCDANIEL
COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a respiratory virus first identified in December 2019. The virus spreads from person-to-person primarily through respiratory droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces. COVID-19 is a new virus that hasn't caused illness in humans before. Older people and those with preexisting conditions are at highest risk. There continues to be much to learn about the virus and to consider in the context of risk and risk mitigation for McDaniel College community members.

The Return to the Hill (RTTH) Task Force, created by President Roger Casey and led by Executive Vice President/Provost Julia Jasken, is a leadership committee that meets regularly to develop recommendations for the President. The RTTH was created as an outgrowth of the Coronavirus Task Force whose work was focused, since its creation in March 2020, on crisis-level planning due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). As the 2019–2020 academic year drew to a close in May 2020 and the College's focus shifted to planning for the future and the re-opening of campus, the RTTH was formed.

In developing recommendations, RTTH is operating under the assumption that there will continue to be some degree of spread in the community during the fall semester and beyond until herd immunity is achieved.

It is important to recognize, then, that as McDaniel College reopens, the primary tools to limit spread of the virus are a combination of personal and public health practices. The Committee's recommendations, whenever possible, are evidence-based and intended to facilitate faculty, staff, and students returning to campus as safely as possible.

Having our community members return to campus involves balancing risk with benefit. The length of this pandemic remains unclear, and the situation continues to evolve. The Committee is committed to on-going review of public health guidance, scientific knowledge, and best practices and will update its recommendations as the need arises.



GOAL

The goal of the RTTH is to develop recommendations for when and under what conditions the College can resume, in whole or part, normal face-to-face operations with the intention of welcoming new and returning students to our campus in Westminster, MD for the Fall 2020 semester.

The RTTH will draw on a wide range of resources in developing its recommendations. This includes guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Maryland State Health Department, Carroll Hospital and other health and government agencies. Committee members have reviewed scientific literature, including COVID-19 case and hospitalization rates for Maryland. Under President Casey's leadership, the committee has been in contact with other academic institutions and reviewed plans from other colleges and universities across the country.

PHILOSOPHY

McDaniel College understands the need for timely, relevant communication to assist students, staff, and faculty in planning. We are also sensitive to making decisions that have the greatest likelihood of success and the least chance of being changed. The result of this measured approach means that recommendations from RTTH may take more time to be issued as cross-campus committees weigh in and provide input. We believe that the opportunity for input outweighs any perceived or actual delays in the announcement of our recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our health and safety protocols will be determined by the order(s) put forth by the State of Maryland under the leadership of Governor Hogan.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

RTTH has 11 members, including the four administrative-vice presidents who make up the President's Council. Five sub-committees each report up to the Leadership Committee. The structure of RTTH allows for in-depth work at the sub-committee level and decision-making action at the leadership level.

Members of the RTTH Leadership Committee and Sub-Committees are listed below. If you have suggestions for any sub-committee, please contact the Chair directly.

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- President, Roger Casey (presoffice@mcdaniel.edu)
- Provost & Executive Vice President, **Chair** (Julia Jasken, jjasken@mcdaniel.edu)
- Chief of Staff, Operations Management
- VP of Finance and Administration
- VP of Enrollment Management
- VP Institutional Advancement
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Risk Management and Environmental Health & Safety
- Dean of Students
- Director of Physical Plant
- Director of Campus Safety
- Dean of Faculty

ACADEMIC SUB-COMMITTEE

- Dean of Faculty, **Chair** (Wendy Morris, wmorris@mcdaniel.edu)
- Provost & Executive Vice President
- Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies
- Faculty members (3)
- Associate Dean of Student Success
- Associate Dean of Academic Life
- Director of Instructional Technology
- Senior Instructional Design Specialist

CAMPUS COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE

- Director of Human Resources, **Chair** (Jenni Glennon, jglennon@mcdaniel.edu)
- Director of Risk Management and Environmental Health & Safety
- Director of Campus Safety
- Director of Wellness
- Director of Physical Plant (Aramark)

OPERATIONS, COMMUNICATION, AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY SUB-COMMITTEE

- VP of Enrollment Management, **Co-Chair**, reporting (Janelle Holmboe, jholmboe@mcdaniel.edu)
- VP of Finance and Administration, **Co-Chair** (Tom Phizacklea, tphizacklea@mcdaniel.edu)
- VP of Institutional Advancement
- Executive Director of Admission Operations & Technology
- Director of Public Relations
- Director of Capital Projects and Facilities
- Bursar

STUDENT RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE SUB-COMMITTEE

- Dean of Students, **Chair** (Elizabeth Towle, etowle@mcdaniel.edu)
- Dean of Admissions
- Associate Dean of Campus and Community Engagement
- Associate Dean of Campus Life
- Associate Director of Residence Life
- Director of Campus Safety
- Director of Risk Management and Environmental Health & Safety
- Director of Physical Plant (Aramark)
- AVI Director of Food Services

OFF-CAMPUS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

- Dean of Students, **Chair** (Elizabeth Towle, etowle@mcdaniel.edu)
- Director of Conference Services
- Associate Dean of Campus and Community Engagement
- Director of Student Engagement
- Director of Athletics
- Director of Diversity and Inclusion

AREA CLUSTERS

Though each sub-committee within the RTTH structure has specific responsibilities, the work of each sub-committee is anchored by our Area Clusters—critical areas that require cross-divisional work and the development of clear policies and protocols.

CAMPUS PREPARATION

- Complete final sanitization of campus and strengthen cleaning protocols.
- Resume food service, perhaps in phased mode.
- Consider potential special housing requirements that may arise
- Quarantined students
- Educate staff on local health department procedures.
- Develop plan for contact tracing, testing, pre-screening
- Consider additional safety measures for staff (e.g. office configuration)

EMPLOYEE RETURN

- Consider ADA-related and ADA-like employee realities
- Create a compassionate plan to transition staff back to normal capacity
- Consider work-study employment possibilities
- Capture technology inventory at staff/faculty level by department
- Consider new alignments of work

STUDENT RETURN

- Identify minimum conditions for return to campus.
- Consider modifications for dedicated infirmary.
- Consider residential life while enforcing social distancing protocols.
- Establish student priority for housing if social distancing limits numbers.
- Consider special considerations for at-risk students.
- Account for special needs of athletic program.
- Develop detailed plans for potential mid-semester outbreak.
- Create strict expectation for health-related student behavior.

INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS

- Establish plan for hy-flex instructional modality.
- Establish mandatory four-week summer faculty training for high-quality online pedagogy.
- Consider alternative instructional models to decrease classroom density and exposure.
- Determine academic calendar options.

KEY DATES

The College plans to announce decisions impacting the fall, including changes to the academic calendar, residence life and instructional methods, no later than July 15, 2020.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PREMISES FOR THE COMMITTEE

- A phased approach is needed for the return to campus.
- Herd immunity will not have been achieved at the time of return to campus.
- Vaccines against COVID-19 will not yet be available at the time of return to campus.
- Approximately 40-50% of individuals infected by COVID-19, and capable of spreading the virus, are asymptomatic.
- A variety of risk mitigation and monitoring strategies need to be in place. Further strategies should be considered as technologies advance and more data becomes available.
- In the event of a resurgence, criteria and procedures need to be in place for campus to shut down rapidly.
- If viral spread continues to decrease, restrictions may be relaxed in a phased approach.
- Plans to return to campus may differ for the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Special consideration must be given to the individual susceptibilities of vulnerable populations within the faculty, staff, and student community.
- Faculty and staff should continue working on a remote basis if feasible, or until directed to return to campus by Human Resources.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities of McDaniel College, Carroll County and the State Department of Health and local health departments is important.
- The degree of exposure matters so reducing the amount of exposure to the virus to the lowest levels possible is warranted.

CONTACT

To contact RTTH, please email: RTTH@mcdaniel.edu

You may also stay up-to-date by visiting the Return to the Hill webpage at: mcdaniel.edu/RTTH

